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THE TOWER OF BABEL ;
OR,
CONFUSION IN LANGUAGE,
ON POINTS CONNECTED WITH THE QUESTION OF
CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS OF RELIGION,
A FERTILE SOURCE OF
STRIFE AND DIVISION
IN THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

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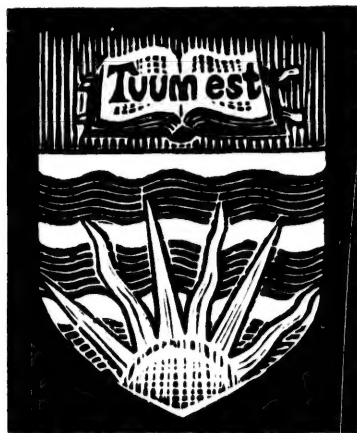
**BY THE REV. ANDREW FERRIER, D. D.,**  
**CALEDONIA, C. W.**

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1849.

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Any profits that may arise from the sale of this Tract, will be devoted to the Sabbath School Libraries of the Author's different Congregations. Those who take five copies, will be entitled to an additional one *gratis*.

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OCCASION OF THIS TRACT.

BELONGING originally to the United Secession Church of Scotland, and more recently to the old school General Assembly of the United States, the writer joined the Presbyterian Church of Canada in 1845,—assured by his friends in this connexion, who encouraged his accession, that as they had existed only a year as a distinct body, their ecclesiastical constitution was by no means matured, and that their desire was to form a Presbyterian Church adapted to the Province, without any necessary connexion with Foreign Churches, and to be organized in full accordance with the Word of God,—in seeking to attain which they were pleased to say it would give them pleasure to have his counsel and co-operation. Before this, he had all along stated to them that he was a Voluntary, a Scriptural Voluntary,—opposed to all civil establishments of religion, and to the very principle of an establishment, and that he doubted whether they would admit him. Yet he was encouraged to make application, and assured of being received. On meeting the Presbytery, and being asked what his views were on the Voluntary question, he frankly confessed that he was a Voluntary; and on conversing more fully on this subject, he found it necessary on being pressed with some nice distinctions which he did not then, and does not yet, fully understand, to state, that “if the Presbytery could not receive him as he was, and had been for nearly thirty years, he must be contented to remain without.” The Presbytery unanimously agreed to receive him, proposing, however, to express that a difference existed between their views and his on this point, at the same time politely and delicately asking if such notice in their Minutes would be agreeable to himself, alleging that they thought it would, to which he cordially assented. It was

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therefore stated in the Records of Presbytery that he differed somewhat from them "as to the duty of nations and governments as to the support of the Gospel,"—that is, as he understood that the Presbytery thought it the duty of nations and governments to support the Gospel by their secular funds, but he thought it not their duty,—thus supposing that views on either side of the Civil Establishment question were to be no terms of ministerial fellowship in this Church; and he has often, by word and letter, in order to vindicate his brethren from what he thought groundless aspersions, extolled them for this exercise of Christian charity and forbearance to one of Voluntary sentiments, and held it up as a proof that practically speaking there is nothing in the constitution of this Church to prevent a union with all Evangelical Voluntaries.

On being inducted to his present charge in April, 1846, the writer, as a matter of course, took exception to those parts of the Confession of Faith which teach, or may be supposed to teach, intolerant and persecuting principles in religion,—abiding, as conscientiously bound, by his original ordination engagements, the free, yet reasonable permission to do which was a further confirmation of his opinion, that there was nothing in the terms of ministerial fellowship to be recognised in this Church which could prevent union with all Presbyterian Ministers of similar views. In this he was still more confirmed, by the fact that a negotiation was in progress, which has been conducted now for more than three years, with the United Presbyterian Church in Canada with a view to union. For all the world knows that that Church has set the example to Christendom of direct and determined hostility to civil establishments of religion in every form; so that if the Presbyterian Church of Canada were in earnest in seeking an honourable union with that body of Christians, they certainly knew that this could never be accomplished but on the principle of mutual forbearance on the establishment question, which it is believed if fully analysed, will be seen to be the only subject of difference between the two Churches. Of this our Tract, we hope, will afford sufficient proof.

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In the circumstances mentioned, it appeared to the writer rather ungracious that at the meeting of Synod in June, 1848, even before the Report of the Union Committee was given in, resolutions were passed—passed precipitantly, and by a new form of process printed for the consideration of members after they were passed, which preclude the likelihood of union with the United Presbyterian Church; and he was sorry, as well as astonished, to find that the members of Court seemed to be so far left to themselves as afterwards to elevate some points of very “doubtful disputation” into terms of ministerial fellowship. From the resolutions referred to he could not but dissent, and that very decidedly, as otherwise he would have been compromising principles in which the longer he lives he sees the more reason to be confirmed.

When the report of the Union Committee was given in, he deeply regretted to find that it seemed to be accompanied and followed by such misrepresentation, ridicule, and even caricature of views on Divine Truth, which he holds to be sacred and Scriptural, and which are hallowed in his earliest associations, as made him feel it necessary again to make a stand by dissenting from a motion approving of sentiments all resolvable into the Civil Establishment principle, on which the Synod, he thought, with more zeal than wisdom had committed themselves, and a concurrence in which he felt would have been a departure on his part from the principles avowed by him on his accession to this Church, and at his induction, as well as from what he humbly though fully believes to be agreeable to the Word of God. In reference to these dissents, he ought to have had credit in the Court for acting conscientiously; and his own Presbytery, he conceives, from the very terms of his connexion with their Church, might have felt themselves bound to protect him in the exercise of his ministerial freedom.

The Synod before it broke up considered it necessary to appoint the Presbytery of Hamilton to ascertain the writer's views on the points in which he differs, or is supposed to differ, from his brethren. But by this time he had returned home, or he would have protested against this appointment,

his own Presbytery being incompetent, seeing they had admitted him on his own principles, and therefore that the whole blame, if blame there be, of his connexion with this Church lies with this Presbytery. If the Synod will look to the history of the Church of Scotland sixty years back, when it could not be compared with themselves in purity of attainment, they will find a case somewhat in point, wherein the Assembly rebuked at their bar a Presbytery for ordaining a Minister who had neither subscribed the Confession of Faith nor the Formula. Now, as the writer has done neither, it must be, in the first instance, at least, with the Presbytery of Hamilton that the Synod have to deal; and if afterwards they propose to him what was done to the non-conforming Minister referred to, the writer's course will be perfectly clear. In the meantime, their own Presbytery of Hamilton have placed him beyond the reach of their own and the Synod's jurisdiction in every thing connected with the question of Establishments, or power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion. The writer, however, from deference to the Synod's appointment, endeavoured to present his views to the Presbytery. But as four of the five questions proposed to him there, are so intricate and vague, and might be answered either in the affirmative or negative, according to the meaning attached to the words, and have little or no reference to the subject of difference, it is not wonderful that his answers are not satisfactory. This he considers a proof of what he still believes, that the difference between himself and them, nay, between the United Presbyterian Church and them, arises in a great measure from the different meaning attached to the same words and phrases.

On the whole, it would be well for the Synod to pause before they push this controversy about the Magistrate's power. It would be well for them to imitate some of the American Churches, by dropping the subject altogether. Our brethren there find no difficulty on such points. Ask a citizen of the the United States if Civil Rulers acting in the discharge of their peculiar duties are bound to make a formal and official recognition of the authority of Revelation, and he is at no loss to

answer the question. He will tell you that the Magistrate is bound by his oath to execute the laws of the State. Ask him if Civil Rulers are bound to acknowledge Christ as having supreme authority over them, and to seek acceptance in the performance of their duties by prayer offered through Him as the only Mediator. He will tell you that the Magistrate has nothing to do in his official character but to execute the laws of the State, to which he is solemnly bound. Ask him if Civil Rulers are bound to recognise the Sabbath as an institution of Divine obligation, and to prevent its open desecration. He will tell you that if the State says he is to put down Sabbath desecration, to put down cursing and swearing, to provide what is thought sound education for youth, and to suppress open immoralities, then, and only then, he is bound to do it. For the State is his only immediate tribunal as a Magistrate, and he is to do as it directs.

All this our good friends of the Presbyterian Church will say tends to infidelity with a witness. No such thing, the American will say. The Magistrate has the tribunal of God to answer at, like other men; but that is his own matter. If the State requires him to do any thing contrary to God's Word, he should decline being a Magistrate, or if the State omits any thing which he thinks should be done, he should refuse to be a Magistrate. Reform the State, promote Christianity, bring all the people under the influence of Divine Grace,—let the Ministers do this, leaving off from their quarrels about the Magistrate's power, and thus as religion advances will the State require of their Magistrates to regulate their measures and laws, and to conduct their whole administration, as they certainly ought, according to the principles of the Word of God. Our Synod will perplex themselves with endless difficulties unless they let these questions alone. God's holy law is universally binding; but it is the subjects as well as the Magistrates who should study to attain a universal conformity to that perfect standard. All questions on this subject resolve themselves into one:—Is it the duty of Magistrates as well as sub-

jects to be Christians? And to this there can be but one answer, for this is doubtless the duty of all men.

The writer believes that he may have mistaken or misrepresented some views of his brethren. If so, it is without design, and he will be happy to be corrected, and will meet in the Christian spirit those who point out mistakes with meekness and love, and without bitter acrimony and angry words.

The subject is handled generally. There are documents and facts which he reserves till he sees what course may be followed by the Synod and by himself.

Some of his brethren have acknowledged that the subject of this Tract is new to them, and that they wish to study it. Others have acknowledged the sentiments here presented to be their own; and it is not to be doubted that a great proportion of the laity will respond to them, and will see that they are sentiments which are not only thoroughly Scriptural, but rapidly gaining credit in the religious public, and are likely soon to regulate the movements and decide the destinies of the Christian world.

The Presbytery are pleased to call the subject discussed the writer's cause. But he refuses this as too great an honour. Were it so, he could not justify himself in giving publicity to his sentiments. It is the cause of Christ, and its triumph is necessary for the peace, purity, progress, and glory of the Church; and if this Tract is the means in any degree of removing prejudices and misconceptions which have been too long cherished, and throwing light upon an important branch of Divine Truth, and of producing a better understanding among those who should walk together as brethren, his labours will be abundantly rewarded.

A. F.

CALEDONIA, 1st June, 1849.

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In commenting on the inspired account of the Tower of Babel the worthy Matthew Henry remarks, that those unhappy controversies, which are strifes of words and arise from our misunderstanding of one another's language, may be owing to the confusion of tongues by which God punished the audacity and pride of the post-deluvian generation. It would be well to enquire how far this may be the case with regard to some religious difference among ourselves. In particular we have often thought with Professor Esson, in his communication to the *Missionary Record*, for January, "that in the discussion which has arisen out of the projected union between the United Presbyterian Church of Canada and our own, there is much misrepresentation of each others views, and that the actual amount of difference between the two parties is not quite so formidable as it seems."

It was simply some judicious remarks in the same communication about obscurity of statement by contending parties, arising out of the imperfection of language, occasioning apparent differences of sentiment where there may be none, and by no means any wish to irritate or expose, that suggested the title of this tract as appropriate.

Some of the Professor's views on the headship of Christ over the nations appear to us to be more remote from recent deliverances of the Supreme Court of the Presbyterian Church of Canada than any of ours, yet, we are of his benevolent opinion that were it not for the imperfection of human language we might "see eye to eye."

Unless, therefore, the Synod can furnish a more ethereal mode of communication than is now employed, we fear it will be a vain attempt to endeavor to bring us all to their sentiments on the points of difference. How necessary, especially on unessential matters, and how valuable is that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

The civil establishment question, however, we suspect, is the only Tower of Babel, the only grand cause of confusion in the language of Evangelical Presbyterians. The principle of a civil establishment of religion, in particular, notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary, is the only "bone of contention" between the Presbyterian and United Presbyterian Churches in Canada, by which strife is engendered and union prevented. Yes, the only real or ostensible difference respects the lawfulness of the civil endowment of the church, or in other words the power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion. It is only this, we are glad to say, (and who should not forbear on this?) it is no difference on the great essential doctrines of grace, that prevents these churches from uniting. This is abundantly evident from the fact that all the questions which have been started, throughout the negotiations have reference to the magistrate's power in matters of religion, and are resolvable into this Civil Establishment principle.

But as it is well known that the endowment of religion is not so much as mentioned in the Confession of Faith, we consider the subject one of fair and even necessary mutual forbearance among the Ministers and Members, at any rate, of those churches which support themselves by their own free contributions. It was on this account that we conceived ourselves to be in no danger of coming into collision with brethren, by the subject becoming a matter Synodical action: we regret as well as wonder to find it otherwise. The ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Canada may hold the establishment principle; they have a right to do so; we give them credit for sincerity in doing so, and knowing that this has been the opinion of most of them we respect them for conscientiously

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adhering to their convictions, and never would have felt ourselves called to break the silence we have hitherto maintained on the question, and to oppose them, although we conscientiously believe they are in error, had they been satisfied with holding this principle as their private opinion. But the matter assumes a very different aspect when, by judicial acts, they introduce peculiar views of this description into their public documents and pass them into the law of their church. This is what those venerated fathers, from whom they boast to be descended, never did,—this is certainly "pushing their principles to an unwarrantable length": at the very least, unless brethren, who have been admitted on professing a satisfactory conformity to the Westminster standards, and especially with the exceptions they consider necessary for maintaining a good conscience, have unrestrained freedom to exonerate themselves by dissent and protestation, such procedure would appear to us to be very arbitrary, to be a glaring reduction to practice, in a different form, of intolerant principles, like those from which we dissent, and to be altogether inconsistent with "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

We go farther back than to our reforming fathers: so long as the primitive church adhered to the simplicity of the apostolic model it remained united; its divisions began and increased with its controversies, often about words to no profit. God, indeed over-ruled much that was evil for the spread of the gospel, and during the first three centuries, before the state began "to corrupt by flatteries," the christian church, "the word of the Lord grew and multiplied," and according to the prophetic description of that period, the rider on the white horse "went forth conquering and to conquer." It is true there were corruptions in the visible church during these early times, and it would be wrong to suppose that the civil establishment of religion, by Constantine, originated all the depaures from the apostolic model, it is certain, however, that corruptions of a new and more formidable kind were introduced with the rider on the red horse, when by the great sword which was given him christianity was incorporated with the

Roman State,* and there is not a doubt that this unhallowed union was the cause. Chiefly was it found, that by thus legalizing christianity, the professing ministers of the gospel became ambitious and worldly minded, and that multitudes of the people, who had no knowledge of christianity, and no love to its doctrines and duties, crowded into membership with the church. It was in this arrangement that "the mystery of iniquity" was brought into shape, and it was in the progress of this system that it at length reached its hideous maturity. The influence of this dark, complicated, and malignant craft of "the wicked one," has pervaded the Nations of Christendom, and has been transmitted to our own times; and some of the evils which preceded or have followed in its train, are only beginning to be discerned by portions of the christian church:—of these we reckon the civil establishment of religion as not the least, for there is every reason to believe that it is only when there shall be an utter extinction of this civil establishment of religion that the latter day's glory shall be introduced. These establishments form barriers to it now which cannot be surmounted but must be all removed, that, as in the primitive ages of the gospel, "the Word of the Lord may have *free course* and be glorified." It is when the system of secularized religion, which civil establishments introduced in the fourth century and which have been cherished in some quarters ever since, are finally abolished,—it is when Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, that the voice shall be heard proclaiming from heaven "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and over."

We would not draw a comparison between the building of the Tower of Babel, of old, and the establishment of the christian religion by state endowments. In several respects, however, it cannot be denied that a striking resemblance might be traced.

* The Author holds the opinion that the first Seal includes the first three centuries, and that the second commences with the Emperor Constantine's unwarranted interference with the Church.

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Like that ancient edifice, the establishment of religion by civil law is a human device having no countenance in the revealed will of God. Like that edifice, whose top was to reach unto heaven, the civil establishment of religion proposes what is impracticable without endangering or destroying the purity of the church,—proposes to give it worldly magnificence, raising it above the supposed casualties of Christ's promised provisions, and giving it the alleged securities of human legislation. That ancient edifice was a contrivance intended to concentrate the population of the earth in one locality, and thus to prevent the accomplishment of God's purpose that every region should be replenished with the race of man.—Establishments of religion have an innate tendency, as could be easily proved, to confine christianity to the country where this scheme of civil law is adopted, and to prevent, as they actually have in a great measure prevented, the following out of the Saviour's commission to his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. The Tower of Babel was never completed, never reached that pinnacle of glory which was proposed, but was arrested in its progress, through the divine providence, that the race of man might be dispersed over the earth, notwithstanding this arrogant attempt to prevent it: so establishments of religion by civil law have never succeeded, never reached their end, never pervaded the christian world, or even united any portion of it in christian fellowship. God in his providence made this measure, when first adopted, the very means of scattering his faithful servants, of dispersing them over distant countries beyond the range of the Roman Empire, and of carrying the gospel in its purity from the central parts of the earth, where it was now corrupted, to far distant lands, where it was propagated with success; so that as ancient Babel was followed by the confounding of language and the scattering of men over the face of the earth, so the civil establishment of religion has ever had a dividing and dispersing influence. Nothing has tended more to separate the people of God from each other than the civil establishment of christianity, although, it is remarkable enough that, like the

Tower of Babel, it was intended by men to have the very opposite effect. It is even worthy of notice that the same effect has followed the civil establishment of religion in every particular country where it has been adopted, even in Scotland itself, where this scheme has existed and still exists in the mildest form, it never united the population. One Secession after another has taken place till now the great majority in Scotland are separated from what is called the National Church, and till that establishment of religion, (the best still upon earth,) has been termed by Dr. Chalmers "a nullity," and, according to Dr. Burns, "may be dispensed with to-morrow."

Having made these observations we dismiss the figure, as unnecessary to our object, and proceed to the important subject we propose to examine.

The visible church is still divided into many sections. There is, however, a twofold division of it, into those who favour and those who oppose its legislative support, which is more and more developing itself. The former seem to be rapidly losing ground, the latter are as quickly increasing their ranks; but, the parties are yet sufficiently matched for direful strife and the struggle may be long and desperate. The issue remains with God, yet, judging from the events of providence, not to speak of the records of scripture, the final result may almost even now be determined. This is as the field of Armageddon, as the gathering to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

In this struggle of principle the whole christian world is interested and neither any christian nor any church should remain neutral. At present, indeed, some churches seem disposed to occupy something like a middle position, they condemn all existing establishments of religion, but will not repudiate the principle itself, which they conceive may, in some circumstances, be lawfully reduced to practice; they cannot free themselves of the fond conceit that the civil magistrate has some official duty to perform, or some province assigned him in the christian church. This middle position, however, is altogether anomalous and untenable: it is without solidity: rather, it is no position at all but a state in which there must be a shift-

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ing and vibrating till one or other of the opposite parties in the great struggle be embraced. Our brethren of the churches referred to, professedly lean to the one side, and practically lean to the other. Their prejudices, which it is not wonderful they cannot surmount at once, bind them to the establishment principle. To the voluntary or anti-establishment principle, which they have always mistaken and do not yet recognise in its scriptural simplicity and purity, their own christian worth and their honourable ecclesiastical schemes and enterprises, there is every reason to think, are fast bringing them over, and will soon produce a perfect reconciliation.

We propose to examine with calmness and candour, and on scriptural grounds, this one subject of the lawfulness of the civil endowment of the church, or otherwise, the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, which is the only subject in which we cannot co-operate, even in theory, with christian brethren whom we sincerely love, and who, we are persuaded, are earnestly seeking, and will yet find on this as on other points, "the truth as in Jesus:" and although we do not expect they will be brought to our views at once, yet we are hopeful they will cease to misrepresent them, and that by a candid and deliberate examination they will find that between themselves and those whose sentiments they have long misunderstood, and much perverted, the differences are greatly in words and phrases, to which the poverty of human language often leads us to attach different shades of meaning. In conducting this enquiry, however, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we speak the sentiments of no man, and of no body of men, but only those for which we are ourselves responsible.

In the sequel it is proposed to show, First, that exceptions taken to the Confession of Faith, regarding the magistrate's power in matters of religion, are reasonable and necessary, Secondly, that current calumnies against those who take these exceptions are groundless and false, Thirdly, that the civil establishment of religion, which the power assigned to the magistrate in the Westminster Confession may warrant though it

does not prescribe, is, in principle as well as practice, unjust and unscriptural, and, Fourthly, that the defence of the civil establishment principle, from the power assigned in the confession to the magistrate in matters of religion, is dishonoring to the royal prerogatives of Christ.

PART FIRST.

Exceptions taken to the Confession of Faith, respecting the power of the Civil Magistrates in matters of Religion, are reasonable and necessary.

“Never perhaps,” it was remarked by a venerated father in the church, “were there more excellent summaries of religious truth than the expository Standards of the Church of Scotland; the Shorter Catechism, the best of the whole, stands high in the first rank of human compositions in the religious world: for orthodoxy, for compression, for comprehension, for argument and perspicuity, it is a system of divinity second to none.” It would be presumptuous, however, to suppose that these compositions are faultless for as “*humanum est errare*,” this can be true of no book except the sacred volume. But it is to nothing that can be considered of vital importance, it is only to certain views respecting the powers of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, into which the compilers, from the spirit of the age in which they wrote, were unwittingly misled, that exceptions have all along and should still be taken by all consistent and enlightened Presbyterians who recognise the Westminster documents as their standard. The American Presbyterians, affording a very extensive proof of the obnoxious nature of such views, go the length of expunging the passages containing them from their editions of the work. We prefer the plan of those Scotch Presbyterians who retain the whole confession as a sacred monument of the erudition, pietas

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zeal, and attainments of their venerated reforming ancestors, but note distinctly to what extent and in what particulars they dissent from their sentiments. Although some denominations in doing this may proceed farther than others, it is certainly matter of gratitude to God that these standards are so sound on vital points that all denominations of Presbyterians recognise them as presenting substantially the exposition of their creed.

There are some, indeed, who, probably from an undue veneration for the composition, and for the men who produced it, have regarded the Confession of Faith as a perfect book, and have been almost ready to put it in place of scripture and to require an unqualified assent to all its details. This must always arise from some interpretation of their own which they force upon the words, for we can hardly believe that any person who understands the language, is impartially acquainted with the history of the period, and regards his Bible as the supreme fountain of christian truth, can be honest and conscientious in assenting to "the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith."

This disposition to cling implicitly and dogmatically to every iota in the Confession may arise from a commendable dread of innovation, and a sincerity of zeal to be faithful to Christ, like our reforming fathers; but it is to be lamented that this just yet unduly cherished veneration for men who, though excellent, "were compassed with infirmities," and for measures which, though unexceptionable as to design, were sometimes unsound in character, has much retarded the progress of the Christian Church. There were two things always kept in view by the early Reformers,—first, they determined through grace, to hold fast what they had already attained; and secondly, they resolved to go forward in the great work, by availing themselves of every favourable opportunity for this purpose, till the Church had attained complete Scriptural simplicity and purity. It is to be feared that at too early a stage some portions of the Church, conceived that they "had already attained, and were already perfect," and that then their zeal cooled, and like the Israelites of old, who did not altogether drive out

the Nations from Canaan, they settled down, in ecclesiastical rest, before they were purged from corruptions, and had reached that Scripture-standard which is attainable, and which should still be sought even in this imperfect world.

On impartial inquiry it would be found that both the first and the second reformati^ons in Scotland, were checked by the anti-Christian principle of State-connexion, and more particularly that the endowment of the Church by the State, on its having its constitution and creed ratified by civil law, was the true, if not the only reason, of its stopping short in following out its noble maxim,—“The Bible is the religion of Protestants, and the text-book of the Presbyterian Church.”

The purity of the Church of Scotland has been always stained from this cause, and its occasional efforts at reformation paralysed and defeated.

The excellent men forming the Free Church cling to the principle of a civil establishment, and boast of being the same as when they were a constituent part of the National Church; but they will soon find that this will form an element of division among them, and will both weaken their influence, and stamp on them a sectarian character.

The Secession Church of Scotland set out on the same principle, in a great measure, without adverting to it; and although their progress was great, because they were genuine friends of Christ, and sought and obtained His blessing, yet they never became prominent and influential till they returned to the grand principle of the Reformation, and resolved, in seeking progress in it, to be guided wholly by the Word of God, and to proceed thus till their ecclesiastical constitution should reach, if possible, the Apostolic model.

Perhaps the Presbyterian Church of Canada, sincere as they are in their endeavours to honour Christ, and advance His cause, may not venture to disentangle themselves from their long and fondly cherished conceptions, in our view, having no foundation in Scripture, of Church and State connexion, or the lawfulness of civil endowments of religion before it be done, as we doubt not it will yet be done, by their prototypes in

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Scotland, and may feel it their duty to be led rather than to lead in so important a movement. We can, however, conceive no reason why they should not be sufficiently faithful and bold for this step, if they saw their way clear, and thus have the honour of being first "to bring back the King" to entire and exclusive government in His Church, and to overstep these formidable barriers to spiritual freedom and progress ; and certain we are that, extending their influence so rapidly in the Province as they are doing, with views in which not a few of their Ministers, many of their other office-bearers, and multitudes of their people, are unable to sympathise, their influence and progress as a Christian Church would be vastly increased were they to resolve to rest on no basis for every part of which they could not plead and present the supreme authority of the Word of God. It will come to this at length. May God hasten it in His time by a large effusion of the enlightening and purifying influence of His spirit.

In the meantime, it is rather stepping before the Presbyterian Church to express our views of those passages of the Confession where intolerant and persecuting principles are taught, and which, though we are told * "the subject of endowments is not so much as mentioned," yet assigns powers to the Magistrate which would certainly warrant him at any time to establish the Church by granting civil endowments ; or even to turn on it the severities of civil pains and penalties by wielding the sword of persecution. But as these passages must ever occasion confusion and difficulty, and as an Overture for an unqualified adherence to every iota in the standards, and of course in these, was introduced into the Synod, and favourably received, and, especially as we were presented by the mover as the indirect cause of his Presbytery thinking such an Overture necessary, it is high time to speak plainly, and to point out specifically and fully those portions of the Confession of Faith to which, in our view, no Scripturally enlightened Christian can give his assent.

* Lotter in *Banner*, by Dr. Burns.

Far be it from us to seek to impugn our excellent standards. It is only where they palpably contradict themselves that we quarrel with them. We most faithfully hold by the standards of the Church, with the single exception of the intolerant and persecuting power which they assign to the civil Magistrate in matters of religion, and as by some process of reasoning, to us altogether inexplicable, some friends of the Establishment Principle imagine that these standards assign no such power to him, which, if not a begging of the question, seems to imply a disapproval by them of lodging such power in his hands, let us hope that only a Tower of Babel, only confusion in language, after all, only a difference of words, is between the advocates and the opponents of the Civil Establishment principle. In this case we shall have occasion to rejoice that our dissent is only from our own interpretation of their sentiments, and not, at least, to any great extent, from the sentiments themselves.

We shall first of all take notice of that passage in the Confession to which exception is, in some measure, allowed. It is the second paragraph of the thirty-first chapter:—

“As Magistrates may lawfully call a Synod of Ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion,—so if Magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the Ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they with other fit persons, upon delegation from their Churches, may meet together in such assemblies.”

This sentence, as we are informed in the act ratifying the Confession, is only to be understood as referring “to *Kirks* not settled, or constituted, in point of government.” But even after the exception taken to this article, it is defective, as it unduly limits the power of the office-bearers of the Church,—seeing it would appear from this that unless the Magistrate be an enemy to religion, the Ministers, and others, in the circumstances supposed, have no power to assemble by their own consent, to consult about the interests of religion.* But on this article we shall not dwell, as there is far more than enough in

* This is just what the Civil Powers then wished, and what is actually the case in England to this day

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the others to be noticed, and to which no exception is taken by the friends of the Establishment principle, to show to scrupulously and honourably conscientious persons, the necessity of receiving the Westminster Confession with due limitations.

The next passage to be considered is the fourth section of the twentieth chapter of the Confession of Faith, where we find the Magistrate armed with power not only over the practices, but over the opinions of men :—

“They who, upon pretence of Christian Liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation ; or to the power of godliness ; or such erroneous opinions and practices, as either, in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church,—they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil Magistrate.”

If we mistake not the meaning of words, it is here maintained to be the duty of the civil Magistrate to proceed against those who entertain and propagate Pelagian, Socinian, Arian, and Arminian doctrines, which are contrary to the known principles of Christianity ; and in conjunction with the Church the civil Magistrate is made the judge of Christian doctrine ; and the Church is bound, by its censures, and the Magistrate by coercion, to suppress or prevent the publication of all such opinions. Gladly would we see all such sentiments discarded from society by the light and power of truth, and certainly those who hold them should be excluded from communion with the Church, or refused admission. But if those who, unhappily for themselves, entertain such opinions are peaceable and orderly members of civil society, what right has the Magistrate to interfere ? What good could be contemplated by his interference ? Would the advocates of the Establishment princi-

ple have all persons holding such heretical sentiments summoned to a civil Court, tried there, and according to some of the passages of Scripture to support this paragraph of the Confession of Faith, subjected to imprisonment, confiscation, banishment, or death, according to the degree of offence or danger attached to the respective sentiments? They should insist on this, as the civil Magistrate's duty if they adhere to "the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith." But all who know human nature might know that instead of tending to check the belief of such doctrines, it would only tend to rivet and extend them, were the civil Magistrate to make any such obtrusive, and as we think, unlawful official interference, as is allowed by this part of the Westminster Standards. But we suppose the doctrine here is, with many of our friends, like the Establishment principle itself,—renounced in practice, and held only in theory.

How contrary is this doctrine of the Confession to its own sentiment, so clearly and beautifully expressed in a preceding paragraph of the same chapter:—"God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship." Here we have sound doctrine; and it is quite preposterous to attempt to reconcile to it the obnoxious passage we have just noticed. In these different statements the compilers of the Confession palpably contradict themselves. We keep by the last sentence quoted, as presenting the real sentiment of the excellent Westminster Assembly. We reject the other sentiments, as those which they resisted, but which the State was so anxious to impose, and so far succeeded, in their attempts to enslave the Church, as to have incorporated with the standards.

Lastly, in the twenty-third chapter of the Confession, we have doctrine taught which, if language have any meaning, is utterly at variance with Christian liberty, and with the Word of God:—

"The civil Magistrate may not assume to himself administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys

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of the Kingdom of Heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure, and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed; for the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."

According to this paragraph also the civil Magistrate is constituted the judge of Christian doctrine, and is bound to suppress every thing contrary to it. And from the passages which are adduced in proof, it appears that he is warranted in cases of error, or supposed error, to inflict severe pains and penalties on those who in doctrine and practice oppose themselves to what is considered the true religion, and even in certain cases, as before, to inflict the punishment of death. And in order that all this may be accomplished the more effectually, he is authorised in his official capacity to convene the Ecclesiastical Courts,—to sit in them,—and authoritatively to control and regulate their procedures by what he considers the mind of God. It may be noticed, too, that by a strange perversion of Scripture, the demand of King Herod to know from the Priests and Scribes of the Jews the place of Christ's birth, which led on to the slaying of the innocent children of Bethlehem, is brought in as a proof of the Magistrate's right to see that every thing in the Church is transacted according to the mind of God.

If this paragraph of the Confession does not give the Magistrate an unwarranted power in the Church, and does not teach compulsory and persecuting principles; we know not in what other language any such principles could be more strongly and plainly inculcated. It is perfect absurdity to attempt to explain away this paragraph, or to put other meaning on the phraseology from what it naturally, necessarily, and perspicuously bears. And to this monstrous paragraph, the true meaning of which no sensible person can mistake, the friends of civil

establishments are required, and insist on requiring others, to give an unqualified, *bona fide*, assent,—without mental reservation, or any limitation whatever.

That the paragraph should give such power to the civil Magistrate is less to be wondered at when we consider the political views of the age in which the standards were written; and soon afterwards, during the persecuting period, our fathers might have seen their sin in consenting to give such power to the Magistrate in matters of religion, in the tyranny, oppression, and violence, which the ungodly civil authorities measured out to the Church. But it is certainly most wonderful that men of enlightened piety should be found willing to subscribe to such sentiments now, or should for one moment seek to defend them. The truth is, as a brother remarks, "Our worthy ancestors, clear and Scriptural as were their views of doctrinal and practical Theology, were in the mist when they approached this politico-ecclesiastical subject; and so it has been with all who have attempted to defend their views on this topic." We have often tried intelligent strangers with this part of the Confession, to see what they thought of it, and even where they had never read it before, they have uniformly pronounced it to be a plain and complete surrender of the freedom of the Church to the civil Magistrate. The passage, indeed, is one which cannot be otherwise explained. "Its terms," says the eminent Dr. Wardlaw, "are too explicit for that, and the texts of Scripture adduced in proof of its different portions form too plain a commentary on the sense in which, by the original compilers, the terms were used to admit of that. Any one who examines the different items of the power assigned in the Confession to the Magistrate, will be satisfied that if he were to exert his claim, and to insist on the practical exercise of all the power that is there lodged in his hands, there would be found but little remaining under the term "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," the right to which is by the article denied him. If the terms do not express an authority *in sacris*, I shall despair of ever understanding the very plainest forms of speech."

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But this is not all, although it is much more than enough for honest minds, not biased by prejudice, to rest their claim to take exception to this passage. Let one sentence in the paragraph of the Confession immediately following be noticed:—"Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him, from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted." Now this sentiment is right as a general proposition. But taking it in the connexion it stands with the paragraph under consideration, it follows that the Arian, the Socinian, and even the infidel Magistrate, is to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the Truth of God be kept pure and entire, and that every other part of spiritual authority be exercised by him which the constructors and supporters of the obnoxious paragraph profess to allow. And observe that to all this no exception is taken. "We have here," says Dr. Wardlaw,—we like to quote from so great an authority,—“the monstrous anomaly of an infidel Magistrate, invested formally with authority, and of course bound in duty to take charge of the unity and peace of the Church, of the purity and integrity of God's Word, of the suppression of blasphemies and heresies, of the profanation or reformation of all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline, and the due settlement, administration, and observance of all the ordinances of God. Really if our brethren are not themselves shocked and shaken by such an outrage on all the principles of reason, religion, and common decency, they must be in possession of some modes of explanation of their own to which I am a stranger, and with which I have no desire to be familiar.”

Such are those parts of our otherwise valuable standards to which the friends of the civil Establishment principle, even in the nineteenth century, seem determined to enforce an unlimited and unqualified adherence, and for coolly subscribing to which the Presbytery of Hamilton have ordered a copy of the book to be procured. But we suspect they will find themselves entangled in difficulties, especially when pious and enlightened

candidates for the Ministry,—students of discrimination and decision, make their appearance, and are appointed to the different Presbyteries to be taken on trials for licence to preach the Gospel. And how will Ministers and Sessions act in future, when conscientious and intelligent laymen, chosen to the Eldership and Deaconship, as we are told has already happened, refuse to assent “to the whole doctrine of the Confession?” Will they pass over or modify to suit the views of such candidates? They must do it, as report says has been done already, in some cases, as well as in our own, or lose these honourably scrupulous and conscientious candidates; and if they refuse, their Church will soon be rent in sunder. Some Ministers who have assented to “the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith,” but whose views on these passages are nearly the same as our own, have told us that they only assented according to the way in which they received them, not in which the language might naturally be construed. We have been told, although we do not believe it true, that some who are most strenuous in wishing to enforce upon others these antiquated and anti-Christian notions on the Magistrate’s power in matters of religion, do not entertain them as their own private sentiments. All this, however, serves to show that there is something wrong, either in these parts of the standards, or in the constitution of some minds from which better things might be expected. We have no hesitation in saying that the error is in the standards, and that it ought to be rectified by such limitations in assenting to the Confession as will preserve unity among us all.

We would advise for the glory of Christ, the Church’s Head, with which this matter might be shown to be closely connected, that such exceptions as are necessary for the sake of consistency, be allowed in all cases. If the friends of the civil Establishment principle will not listen to candid and kind remonstrance in reference to such an arrangement, it would be well that the civil Magistrate would, once for all, according to the power given him, step into the Church Courts, and rectify these abuses and errors; and after that would act as Gallo

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did, who confined his administration to civil matters, of which only he had the care, and very properly refused to interfere as a Magistrate with spiritual matters,—in reference to which it is said in language as often misinterpreted as any principle of the opponents of civil Establishments, that he “cared for none of these things.”*

But, not to dwell longer on this part of the subject, it is surely not surprising that serious persons, desiring to honour the Saviour, should be found, who cannot assent to those passages of the Confession on which we have animadverted. To us it seems rather wonderful that there are those of undoubted integrity and piety, professing to hold the supreme Headship of Christ in His Church, who stand out for retaining them, under any possible explanation, in their creed, and for enforcing an assent to them by those to whom they seem so contrary to the genius of Christianity. Minds are differently constructed. For our part, although we have seen various attempts to defend those portions of the Confession we have considered, and to show their consistency with Christian liberty, they have never given us any satisfaction. It would be easy were it necessary to reply to such constrained and unnatural efforts. There is, however, sufficient evidence, from the character of the period when the documents were written, from the facts chiefly in Scottish history both before and after their production, and, in particular, from the arrogant pretensions of the civil rulers of these comparatively dark ages, to judge and decide in all ecclesiastical, as well as civil matters, that we put no unfounded or overstrained construction on those passages of the Westminster standards, to which we have been referring, and to which we, with thousands far better able to judge, refuse our subscription.

On the whole then, it seems evident, that since explanations so opposite are given of these passages of the Confession of Faith by persons of undoubted piety and worth, there must at

* The meaning is, that he held himself a judge of civil not of spiritual matters, and that his care or superintendence was not of the latter, but of the former. Gallio was a Scriptural Voluntary.

least be some obscurity or ambiguity in them, some confusion in language between the parties, or Tower of Babel, by which they are severed from each other, or kept asunder, and no serious difference in sentiment which should occasion strife and division.

PART SECOND.

Current Calumnies, against those who take these Exceptions to the Confession, are groundless and false.

As confusion in language, we charitably believe, is the real cause of those calumnious conclusions or inferences to which we are about to refer, and not, at least generally, any malignity of feeling, we shall give an important definition both on the side of the opponents, and on the side of the advocates of civil establishments of religion; and we shall give these in the language of each party respectively.

By the anti-establishment, or, as it is usually called, the Voluntary Principle, is meant nothing more nor less than—“That Christianity shall be left to maintain and propagate itself in the world through the medium of the unconstrained exertions of those who believe it, accompanied by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, exactly in the same way as it did during the first three centuries before any civil establishment existed. This is what is meant by the separation of the Church and State. This is what is meant in common language by the destruction of the establishment. It is not the destruction of the Protestant Faith, much less the subversion of Christianity: but it is dissolving the connection which at present exists in Great Britain and other countries between the State and the Christian Religion, so that the latter instead of being upheld and propagated by means of legislative enactments, shall be left entirely free from all state interference. This is

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By this definition of the Voluntary Principle, given by one of themselves we abide, and shall square all that we bring forward on the subject, and we shall allow no mis-statement of it by any of the opposing party, nor any illegitimate conclusion to be made, as has been too often done, by not looking at the principle in this its simple and scriptural form, as given by an authority which they all respect.

On the other hand for our definition of the Establishment Principle we quote from two authorities which stand high on their own side of the question, and whose talents and worth embalm their memory with universal veneration. The first is Dr. Paley who gives the three following ingredients as entering into the constitution of a religious establishment. 1st. A clergy, or an order of men secluded from other professions to attend upon the services of religion. 2nd. A legal provision for the maintenance of the clergy. And, 3rd. The confining of that provision to the teachers of a particular sect of christianity." The second authority is the lamented Dr. Chalmers, whose definition is very short and satisfactory:—"We should assume as the basis of our definition for a religious establishment, or as *the essential property* by which to characterize it, —a sure legal provision for its ministrations."

On one or both of these definitions we shall found all we say in opposition to the system described, and to the principle on which that system rests; for although some of our friends profess not to seek the practice, but only to hold the principle of a civil establishment of religion, yet that, we apprehend, makes no difference, as the practice is but the developement of the principle; and as it is against the principle that would lead to this practice, and not against any modification of it, such as we have heard expressed,—that an endowment is not essential

* The Rev. Dr. McKerrow's History of the Secession Church.

to a civil establishment of religion, for that is a different principle altogether, and one for anything we know, too harmless to make any quarrel about. We hold with Dr. Chalmers that a legal provision is *essential* to the civil establishment of religion.

Those who hold the Voluntary Principle, according to the foregoing harmless and reasonable definition, and simply because they hold it, have been accused, by some of the over-zealous friends of the Compulsory or Establishment Principle, of entertaining sentiments of a very objectionable character. Such accusations, we charitably believe, are made under the mistake that not this Voluntary Principle, but some other which is mistaken for it, and which probably Voluntaries renounce as much as Compulsories do, is called, or supposed by the accusers to be, the Voluntary Principle. We know that this is the case; and every candid person will allow it to be quite unfair. If any who hold the Voluntary Principle, entertain unscriptural views, these can have no connection whatever with that principle, in itself unexceptionable; and it is altogether unjust to charge them on the Voluntary Principle itself. Such, however, is the influence of prejudice that this has been done times without number, and that it is still resorted to by those from whom more candour and meekness, and more christian courtesy and charity might be expected. To so great a degree have the Compulsories carried this mode of reasoning that there is ground to believe they are brought to their last shifts, and have no better means of defending their own cause, and opposing Voluntaryism. They will not allow Voluntaryism to be neither more nor less than what it is, for if they did they might be obliged to confess that they were almost, if not altogether, Voluntaries themselves. We have the charity to believe that many of our good friends, who profess to hold the Establishment Principle, are Voluntaries in the proper sense of the word, and will not deny it when what they call Voluntaryism is stripped of the excrescences with which they have loaded it, and presented in its true scriptural form. At all events if they are not so, we must hold that they are thus far

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short in Scriptural attainments. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that in some cases there is so great an approximation in those who profess or pretend to hold the Establishment Principle, to the real sentiments of Voluntaries, that rather than acknowledge identity of sentiment they (we shall not say purposely, for they are conscientious men,) misrepresent the sentiments of the other party to keep up the appearance of difference, and prolong unnecessary disputation. This appears from an admission made by a very violent defender of the Establishment Principle, who allows that the Voluntary Principle is in itself sound and scriptural, whilst he gratuitously blames its friends only for pushing it to an unwarrantable length.*

But notwithstanding all that has been insinuated to the contrary, the foregoing is their principle, and they hold it without abatement, and without extending it beyond the plain and obvious meaning of the phraseology employed. It all resolves itself into the lawfulness of the civil endowment of religion. It is not the Voluntaries who push their principle in this manner: it is the friends of the civil establishment principle who push it for them by their gross misrepresentations. They present Voluntaryism not as it is, but as they wish or conceive it to be,—not in its scriptural features, but with the distortions they are pleased to attach to it,—not as a simple constituent element of the gospel of Christ, but clogged with uncharitable and illegitimate inferences of their own, in which they conceal its celestial properties, and give it an anti-christian character.

Our friends of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, professing to hold the Establishment Principle, practise this Voluntary Principle themselves, and inculcate it from the very same passages of scriptures which the Voluntaries employ in its defence whilst they blame the Voluntaries for going too far: and without waiting to ascertain how far they they go, conclusions are put in their name which they never admitted, and which we hold to be groundless calumnies: and then the Compulsories, or friends of Establishments, expose these perversions of

* See Letter in *Banner*, dated 8th October, 1847.

their own as unscriptural, which they certainly are, and immediately throw all the blame on the Voluntaries, when the blame is their own, and when all the while the voluntaries tell them again and again that these are not their views at all but gross misrepresentations.

Marvellous surely is the influence of prejudice! So wedded are the friends of Establishments (judging of them from what has been written and spoken without contradiction) to their principle, that they will not listen to facts. They persist in their own perverted descriptions of what Voluntaryism is, and will not allow the Voluntaries to speak for themselves, and to tell in their own way and language, which certainly they are best able, and have the best right to do, what they are, and to sustain their principles, as they easily can, from the Word of God,—as if interested opponents knew these principles better than Voluntaries themselves. The advocates of the Establishment Principle tell the world, they tell even the Voluntaries, what the Voluntaries are; and then oppose the opinions they ascribe to them as seriously as if these opinions were held, and although the slandered Voluntaries make many an attempt to represent their own cause, and their own views, and tell their opponents that the sentiments they are charged with are not theirs at all, that theirs are scriptural sentiments, and that they renounce all contrary ones, yet the advocates of the civil establishment principle would not allow, if they could, the Voluntaries the privilege of self-vindication,—still insisting on being the best interpreters of what Voluntaryism is: and having set up their own frightful image of it, they cast unsparingly, and impiously, all their weapons of jealousy and slander against it,—as if the Voluntaries, though a dangerous people, which they certainly are, to the Establishment Principle, did not know their own principles, and were not able to give to the voluntarism they profess a just description. It is much to be regretted that these friends of the Establishment Principle still catch, in this manner, at every calumny that was circulated against voluntarism, when Voluntaries were less known, less respected, less numerous, less influential.

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Let the Voluntaries still speak for themselves. Sooner or later they will be heard for their cause: for it is the cause of Truth and Righteousness,—the cause of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Let them state clearly and truly what they are. Let them show, by their profession and conduct, that they are not the bugbears, not the destructives, not the non-descript monsters they have been represented. Let them show that they are men, that they are christians, that they are consistent Bible christians; and that they are most diligent and zealous for the glory of Christ, and for the peace, purity, and prosperity of his kingdom. Let them thus forever shut the mouth of slander: or let the public hold the utterer of future misrepresentations to be an inventor of calumnious falsehoods!

Marvellous, indeed, is the influence of prejudice, when those holding the Establishment Principle, though acting on the Voluntary Principle themselves, are so inveterate against the Voluntaries! Is it lest they should be taken for them as perhaps they too often are? or is it that they still hug their chains whilst they profess to be free? Voluntaryism, according to recent statements, written or spoken, by Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, of which, with feelings of amazement and sorrow, we have been ourselves a witness, is an attempt to set Nations free from obligation to God,—is to throw loose civil society, and especially civil rulers from all responsibility to their Maker,—is to leave men to do as they will without supposing them to be at all accountable for their principles and actions! Voluntaryism is trusting the Church of Christ to the rough hand of chance, unprotected, in any shape,* by the civil powers, and loosing Magistrates from all concern with religion! The magistrate may be a religious man when in the Church, but when he enters the Civil Court he is to forget his religion, and act as if there were no God, and no hereafter! He is to recognise no Bible principles, but to judge, and decide, and conduct his whole administration irrespective of the solemn consideration that the eye of God sees him, and

* Their property and their christian liberty ought certainly to be protected.

that he is accountable for every thing his heart devises, his tongue utters, his hand doeth ! Such is Voluntaryism according to statements unretracted by those who made them, and uncontradicted by the friends of the Establishment Principle, in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, some of them made to their own disgrace in their Supreme Ecclesiastical Court when constituted in the name of Christ. No wonder they hate Voluntaryism ! No wonder they will have no dealings with those who profess it. No wonder that all idea of union with Voluntaries, whose principles these are alleged or supposed to be, should be abandoned ! O how true is it that men, through prejudice, are left "to call evil good, and good evil, to put darkness for light, and light for darkness, to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !" How true is it that "God gives to some strong delusion that they should believe a lie !" We would say with the Rev. Mr. Thornton,—“If this be Voluntaryism, I claim exemption from the category. Such a sickening caricature I have no disposition further to expose.” Surely we need not say, and much less wait to prove that this is not Voluntaryism,—that Voluntaries are as much opposed to these sentiments as any Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Canada,—that these are “railing accusations” brought against them, from whatever source they have originated. Surely we need scarcely attempt to refute or disprove these miserable attempts at crimination ! No, the conclusion of the whole matter, did we come to it at once, is that Voluntaries, Scriptural Voluntaries, are as zealous, as conscientious, as diligent, as any class of christians, in inculcating it as the whole duty of men,—of men in every possible position and relation,—“to fear God, and keep his commandments.”

But though it might be sufficient to refer to the definition of Voluntaryism with which we set out, yet, as it is necessary to endeavour to drive the bottom out of those slanderous misrepresentations, which are still made by Ministers and members of the Church to which we belong, and with whom we are desirous to live in harmony and love, we must be more particular ; for we are sorry to find that a less public manner of

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will, to our knowledge, in industrious circulation.

There are chiefly four specimens of ecclesiastical slander
which we have had occasion to witness, to each of which we
wish to turn the attention of our brethren and friends, because
these are not only altogether groundless, but absolutely false;
and as we believe it to be from no evil design, but solely from
want of information, that any in our Church have either har-
boured or vented such uncharitable thoughts of brethren whom
they ought to respect and love, and with whom it would be
an honour and a blessing to themselves, as well as an unspeak-
able benefit to the Province, to be united in ecclesiastical fel-
lowship, we shall hold them all excused hitherto; but if ever
the slanders we are about to notice are repeated by any of us
we shall consider and treat their utterers as reckless and mali-
cious calumniators.

1. Voluntaries are said to hold that nations, as such, are not
under law to God.

This charge has been repeated a thousand times, and although
it is bad enough, yet, perhaps, having nothing worse, and little
else to bring against Voluntaries, the friends of the civil Estab-
lishment principle persist in its repetition. It was current
before the Disruption, but should never have survived it, espe-
cially with those whom that memorable event of good, brought
into circumstances so similar to those against whom the cal-
lanny was directed. But we are sorry to find that there are
those among us in Canada who have the assurance to repeat
the charge, and we are sorry to have discovered it on the lips
of brethren whom we love. In a letter written in the *Banner*,
this is said to be the only question between the Presbyterian and
United Presbyterian Churches. If so, we should say there is
no question between them at all, for this we maintain is a slan-
derous misrepresentation. We speak only for ourselves. We
hold as decidedly, and as fully to Scriptural Voluntaryism as
any, to whatever denomination they belong. But we are of
one mind with the Presbyterian Church of Canada in main-

taining that Nations as such, Nations geographically considered, Nations in civil matters are under law to God; and we shall hold every one who will presume to assert the contrary of us, to be a deliberate and wilful slanderer. Nay, it is the belief of all Voluntaries with whom we have ever been, or wish to be connected, that Nations and their Rulers are under law to God. All the public affairs of Nations should be conducted according to God's will, and under the direction, so far as applicable, of God's Word. The duties of Nations and Rulers must always coincide with the dictates of reason, and the principles of Scripture. If they are not pointed out in God's Word in express language, yet still the grand Scriptural principles of Truth and Righteousness, and a regard to the glory of God, and the good of men, should regulate and stimulate every national action. We hold this doctrine. We hold it in the most unequivocal sense. We hold it in the same sense with the friends of the civil Establishment principle. We recollect to have said in the Synod, as our own opinion, that Magistrates are under law to God. One of the members interrupted, asking if it were meant in their official capacity. Certainly, we said, in their official capacity, and in every capacity they are under law to God. He seemed surprised, and said, betraying the mistake under which so many good men labour, that our brethren of the United Presbyterian Church were of a different opinion. We affirmed that we were sure they would agree with us, and thought we knew their principles better than any other member of Court. Yes, though we are not their advocate, but defend only our own opinion, we shall venture to say, without consort with one of that Church, that they hold this principle,—they maintain the plain, rational, Scriptural doctrine that Nations and Rulers, as such, are under law to God. We offer no proof till the friends of the civil Establishment principle bring proof to the contrary. It is sufficient to affirm that all Scriptural Voluntaries hold this principle, nay, hold it purely,—more purely, and faithfully than any friend of the civil Establishment principle can do; for they will not allow it to be corrupted and impaired by illegitimate inferences;—

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they will not allow the conclusion that as Nations are under law to God, especially in their civil authorities,—so it is the duty of these authorities to endow the Church. This seems to be the constant aim of our Establishment friends; and it is here, and here alone, that the difference between us lies;—for our conclusions are the very opposite, the endowment of the Church being no where required, and being contrary, as shall afterwards appear, to the whole tenour of Scripture record. Nations and Magistrates are under law to God; but it would be rebellion against the law of God, and no fulfilment of it for the civil rulers on this account to endow the Church: it would be out-stepping their prerogative. Magistrates are under law to God, and therefore they should keep the Divine law, and not violate it, as they have too often done by the civil endowment of religion. Magistrates are under law to God officially, just as Ministers are, just as lawyers and physicians are,—bound to obey and serve God in all the duties of their respective callings, and in all that God requires. Men individually, all men individually, men also in their social and public capacities, men in every association and office of society, are bound by the divine law to live to the glory of God. A Magistrate, in particular, whose trust is so important and responsible, is bound, in all that he does, in his public as well as in his private capacity, to conduct himself as in the Divine presence, and as accountable to God for all his actions. Is it necessary to say more on this subject? Will the slander still be repeated?

2. Voluntaries are said to maintain that the Magistrate has nothing to do with Religion.

Although this statement is little more than a modification or part of the preceding, and although what has been said might be sufficient to repel it, yet being often presented as a distinct charge, it must be briefly noticed. This slander has been published in newspapers, in pamphlets, in public meetings, and even in Church Courts; and none of the friends of the civil Establishment principle consider it necessary to contradict it. We have seen it received and cheered as if it had

been true,—as if it had been no exaggeration, no misrepresentation, no falsehood. The Magistrate, as such, has nothing to do with religion. This gross and malicious allegation, often repeated by the burning tongues of calumniators before the Disruption, was uttered in the Presbyterian Synod of Canada, with such seriousness, that even the sober and conscientious friends of the Establishment principle seemed to believe it true; or if not, they wanted the fortitude, the justice, the dignity, or the courteousness to contradict it. They allowed an Evangelical Church with which they were negotiating,—a Church which has been signally owned by Christ, to be reviled in their Court. The Magistrate, as such, it was said, the Voluntaries, the United Presbyterian Church, maintain, has nothing to do with religion. We reply to this that it is a calumnious falsehood. It is the very reverse of truth. He has nothing to do, indeed, all Voluntaries will unite in saying, with the endowment of religion. It is always, we find, the aim of our good friends to protect the Magistrate's supposed right to endow the Church. But the endowment of religion, or the Church, let it be remembered, is not religion. We hold it to be irreligion,—to be an unrighteous action,—to be contrary to the Word of God. But because this is the opinion of all Scriptural Voluntaries does it afford any foundation for the slanderous insinuation of Voluntaries maintaining that the Magistrate has nothing to do with religion? It is rather the reverse,—rather an evidence that Voluntaries would guard him against departing from the straight course of duty, and would teach him to be faithful in all things to God and man. Voluntaries say that the Magistrate, as such, has no province at all in the Church,—no right or power to dictate, direct, or govern; but, if a professor, is simply a member, like other men, and under the jurisdiction of the Church Courts equally with others around him, and bound in all things to obey God's law both in his private and public capacity, and to adorn in all things, whether personal or official, the doctrine of God our Saviour. But is this a reason for the allegation that he has nothing to do with religion? “As a man,” we heard one saying, “the

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Voluntaries allow that the Magistrate has to do with religion, but not as a Magistrate." When did any Christian Voluntary affirm or admit this? Never;—it is our deliberate opinion that the Magistrate has to do with religion, both as a man and as a Magistrate;—as a man like all other men,—as a Magistrate like all other official characters, he should discharge the duties of his public office in the fear of God, in conformity to the precepts of God, as accountable to God, and for the glory of God.

It is even the Magistrate's duty, to encourage by his influence the introduction and progress of religion among his subjects by every judicious and legitimate means. If there be civil obstructions to the entrance of Missionaries, he ought, as far as possible, to remove them, and to afford all possible facility to the servants of God in prosecuting their honourable work. The Magistrate has every thing to do with religion. He should be a Christian himself. All his duties, whether sacred or secular, should be performed religiously. In short, he should make the whole weight and influence of his station, as a civil functionary, to bear on the purity and progress of Christianity.

It may be further noticed on this particular, that there seems to be a great disposition among the friends of the Establishment principle to catch at words, and to create confusion by perverting them from their true meaning. When it is said by the opponents of their principle that religion, or the Church, especially the true religion or Church, requires no protection from the civil Magistrate at all, and that in this view he has simply to let it alone,—meaning only that it is not the Church that needs protection, but the members of the Church that the Magistrate should protect in the enjoyment of their rights as citizens to worship God according to their consciences,—then the friends of Establishments are all alert, and sieze on the expression, "Let it alone," as if this meant that he is to let religion alone, and have no regard to it in the management of his civil trust. Our friends have no patience with this very harmless expression, but lay hold on it for the purpose of gross

misrepresentation ;—as if those speaking in this manner meant that the Magistrate was to shake himself free of all religious principles when he sat in a civil Court, and that there he should know no God, and no Bible, but conduct his duties as a heathen might be supposed to do. Even Dr. Symington, in his valuable, though in some respects radically defective work on the Messiah's Kingdom, has not the candour to avoid this silly and groundless misrepresentation.

This is a subject which has been luminously demonstrated by M. Vinet, Professor of Divinity in Lausanne, who has been called "the Chalmers of Switzerland," in a work "profoundly logical, searching into the deepest principles of the subject," written with "feeling as intense, holy, and devotional, as the intellect he displays is masculine and pure:"—

"Society," he says, "or more strictly speaking, the State, which seems to have renounced the persecution of creeds, has not yet renounced their protection ; and, perhaps, it will be expected, that having protested against persecution, we shall accept of protection with avidity. Yet, it is most true that we desire that the profession of religious convictions should be protected as the common right of all, and consequently without distinction of creeds. We are not desirous that any particular creed should be protected, nor in general, believers to the exclusion of unbelievers. We deprecate protection for the same reason that we deprecate persecution. For the right of protection necessarily involves the right of persecution. Endeavours are made to limit this right, to prevent its exercise beyond the point where protection terminates ; it may be forbidden to advance farther ; but the limit is arbitrary, and it is impossible to conceive how, in sound logic, the State can be denied the right of persecution, after having been allowed that of protection. Yet the idea is a modern discovery. The times are not very remote, when the State, not indeed more reasonable, but certainly more logical than at present, arrogated to itself and exercised the right for which it now contends, in virtue of a distinction altogether gratuitous. If any thing be needed to prove that this distinction was not then recognised,

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it is the fact, that whenever the persecuted sects became the established religion of the country, they were not satisfied with being simply protected by the civil power, but they made use of the authority with which the State invested them, to banish or to oppress all who differed from them, to such an extent as to induce a philosopher of the last century to say, with more of asperity than irony, 'that religious liberty is only granting to every man the right of persecuting in his turn.' And how would the logic of facts contradict that of sentiment? Does not every privilege imply some exclusion? Can we put any honour upon some which will not be more or less an affront to others? And the faith which is not protected, is it not, by that very circumstance, persecuted, at least negatively? It follows that for any religion whatever to accept protection, is to accept, as a consequence, the right of persecution."*

Such are the enlightened sentiments of this talented Swiss reformer; and we know that the celebrated historian, Dr. D'Aubigne, and others of that school hold the same opinions, and have thus got far a-head of many of their brethren here and in Scotland, by having renounced the principle as well as the practice of civil Establishments. It ill becomes those who extol these great men, and esteem them as brethren in Christ, to utter the baseless slander that the opponents of Establishments hold the Magistrate to have nothing to do with religion. Let this slander then be no longer uttered.

3. The Voluntaries are said to sanction the open desecration of the Sabbath.

With some the difference between the Voluntaries and the friends of the civil Establishment principle on this subject is considered as presenting the most startling difficulty. We have even heard it said by some of the latter, that were it not for the views of the former on this point, they could have no objections to their other opinions. But on this topic, as on others, there have been slanderous misrepresentations made.

* See Dr. Heugh's notices of the state of religion in Geneva and Belgium.

It has been held up as the current opinion of those who hold Scriptural views on the manner of supporting the Christian Church, that persons should be allowed to prosecute secular business on the Lord's Day without restraint,—that shops should be allowed to be open for merchandise if those who buy and sell have freedom on the subject,—that the farmer should be allowed to plough and sow and reap his fields if he choose, and that the labourer and mechanic should be permitted to pursue their respective occupations;—that, in short, it should be left to every individual to do as he pleases; and, provided he does not create disturbance that would break the general peace, he should be met by no civil hinderance. Perhaps some, in the keenness of controversy, and in a moment of excitement, have given occasion in part for some of these accusations; But the question still is—What are the opinions of religious Voluntaries on this important subject?

Without attempting to give the views of others, lest we should mistake them, and without supposing that all are agreed on this question, either on the side of the friends or on the side of the opponents of the civil Establishment principle, we shall simply state our own sentiments. Let it be remembered then as a fundamental principle that every thing of constraint or force in reference to religious belief and practice, is beyond the sphere of the civil Magistrate. If we allow it to be his right in his civil capacity to infringe in any degree on this single line of demarcation, we surrender the turning limit by which the nature of his authority is defined,—we give him power to advance indefinitely, and thus to endow or persecute the Church as he is inclined,—we open the very flood-gates of Erastianism to whatever extent he may be able or disposed to proceed. Keeping, therefore, this simple principle before us, which might be considered as a key to the right understanding of all questions on the Magistrate's power, let us proceed to give our sentiments, briefly, on what is called the Sabbath question, that it may appear how unjustly Voluntaries have been calumniated on this head.

We leave the spiritual sanctification of the Sabbath, as well

as the preservation of truth and order, on every Christian matter, in the hands of the Church alone. We honour Christ by doing so; regarding Him as an Almighty King, who is "Lord also of the Sabbath Day," and who alone can enforce, and bless, and reward its sanctification. As to the co-operation of the civil Magistrate, in his official capacity here, it is incompetent, it is unnecessary, it is no part of his prerogative. The Sabbath is not thus sanctified, it cannot be thus sanctified, by wicked men. Those, however, who profess to be Christians, should strive by every means to promote its sanctification. This they should do by their prayers, their counsel, their example, and their general influence. The Magistrate, as a Magistrate, can do nothing here; but as a Christian, if such he be, he can do much; and the very fact of his being a Magistrate will vastly increase his influence as a Christian, in promoting with other Christians, by his counsel, prayers, and example, the spiritual sanctification of the Sabbath. He will thus become, in the Scripture sense, "a nursing father" to the Church. But it is only in preserving external peace, order, and consistency, that his civil authority should be exercised. The Magistrate, indeed, is bound by the moral law, to which the observance of the Sabbath belongs. He is bound by this precept to keep the Sabbath spiritually as a Christian, and in this to be a pattern to others; and so far as becoming external tranquillity and order are necessary, and their enforcement can be considered as included in his civil duties, he should consider himself bound by this precept to exercise his authority in preventing the Sabbath from being openly desecrated. Further he cannot go as a Magistrate, for all his duties in this capacity are civil duties. Yet, if he is faithful here, his authority and influence will have the most salutary results, and with the blessing of God a powerful tendency to promote the spiritual sanctification of the Lord's Day. We wish to be particular on this subject, to show that Voluntary principles, so far from giving sanction to the open desecration of the Sabbath, are more calculated to be effectual than the principles of the friends of civil Establishments of religion, in securing and

advancing both the outward and the spiritual sanctification of this holy day. We would even remark that the religious services incumbent on society on the Sabbath should make it the duty of the Magistrate to exercise his civil authority in regard to this day with some peculiarities, so as to afford the necessary external quiet and decorum which the right discharge of religious duties renders proper and necessary. We believe we carry our views further than some do on this question.

There are laws for the Sabbath,—laws to prevent taverns from being open, at least during public worship,—to prevent traders from carrying goods,—to prevent travelling,—to prevent the open prosecution of secular employment. To these and such like laws we have no objections, nay, we heartily approve of them, as intended to preserve that civil peace which religious subjects require for the engagements of that day; nor have we any objections, but every reason to wish, that the Magistrate show his zeal for the Divine glory, and for the best interests of society by their firm, impartial, and conscientious execution.

These laws are good. We would carry them to a much greater extent, and as without enforcement they are of no use, and may even be injurious, we would have them strictly and universally enforced. But they will never, we fear, be enforced with fidelity by Magistrates who are not religious themselves; and if Magistrates are Christians we will venture to say that from the influence of their own example, and their throwing the whole weight of their Christianity into the exercise of their civil functions, even these laws would in a great measure be unnecessary. In this case the force of public opinion would in general be sufficient to preserve all becoming external order on the Sabbath. After all this is the most that can be done at any time. The Sabbath will be spiritually sanctified only by Christians; and it will be externally sanctified by citizens just in proportion as Christianity advances, and thus as public opinion operates in its favour. We are willing to risk Sabbath observance on this foundation, as at once the strongest, the best, and the most appropriate and efficient. The

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blame of the external desecration of the Lord's Day lies more with the ecclesiastical authorities than the civil; and especially are Established Churches, who make so much of Sabbath laws in regard to religion, highly culpable here. They would have the Magistrate to punish the violation of Sabbath laws when the violators are members of their own Churches, and should be censured ecclesiastically for their conduct, although this is not done; and when perhaps these Magistrates are also communicants, and chargeable themselves with grossly profaning the Lord's Day. We have known persons who were in the habit of receiving the sealing ordinances of the Church, who, notwithstanding transacted their secular business on the Sabbath, who travelled unnecessarily on the Sabbath, and who held their jovial festivities on the Sabbath; and these men were Magistrates, who should have been examples in a religious view to the community at large.

In short, we would say here that as Christ is the only King of the Church, and, especially, is Lord of the Sabbath, so all laws for its observance must come from Him, and that whatever law of the civil authorities among men is needed for outward peace and order on the Sabbath, should be enforced as a matter of civil right, and not on the principle of the civil Magistrate pretending to any official authority in the Church, or any title as a civil ruler to enforce the observance of Divine ordinances. When the people of God assemble to worship Him, let the Magistrate see that they are not disturbed by any breach of civil peace; and throughout the whole Sabbath let the Magistrate protect the religious citizens, whilst they prosecute their sacred duties, by suppressing or preventing outward disturbance of every kind. Further he cannot go in his official character. It is by moral and not by physical force that Sabbath profanation, in a religious view, should be prevented. It is only where the violation of the Sabbath amounts to a disturbance of the peace of citizens in the sacred employments, whether public, private, or secret, peculiar to that day, that the Magistrate, as such, should interfere. Here, however, we would give him much power, and be very particular in taking

every proper means to bring about and preserve strict and becoming external decency on the Sabbath. There are some things, there may be many things, which the Magistrate ought to do, and ought to be empowered and encouraged to do, for preserving outward order on the Sabbath which may not be necessary on other days. There are many things which would disturb the peculiar exercises of religious citizens on the Sabbath, which would not disturb the employments of other days. In all such cases we would say that the Magistrate should interfere, or rather should be empowered to interfere, and should exercise his civil authority and general influence for the preservation of that quiet and peace which such citizens require for the holy duties in which they are engaged on the Lord's Day. In doing all this, however, let it be distinctly understood that whilst the Magistrate is enforcing order and laws to prevent the external desecration of the Sabbath, he is simply exercising his civil office to prevent distraction and molestation to the citizens. In this view his civil authority might be carried out to so great an extent, as in some parts of the United States where there is no Establishment of religion, that all that the friends of the civil Establishment principle wish to secure by what they call laws for the observance of the Sabbath, and much more, and that far more efficiently, would be secured by changing not the thing, but the name, and making the Magistrate, in a way which all would understand and respect, and which all would be obliged to obey, exercise his authority only as a civil functionary. For instance we are christian citizens, and have certain peculiar duties to perform on the Sabbath; and we wish civil protection. On this holy day our duties are of such a nature that they could not be performed if noise were to be permitted on the streets, by the stir of business, or the strife of tongues. Let the Magistrate certainly prevent public markets, public amusements, trafficking of every kind on the streets and highways, all open travelling, and every such employment by which Christians in the usual occupations of the sabbath would sustain interruption or injury. Let this be done in whatever variety, and to whatever extent

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the state of society in reference to religious progress may permit, and the wishes and necessities of the respectable citizens may render necessary. Let it be done, however, by the Magistrate, not as a spiritual ruler, and, therefore, not as legislating for Sabbath Sanctification, for that respects the inward frame, and is beyond the reach of his civil jurisdiction; but simply for the outward tranquillity of the citizens. Some, we dare say, will consider these distinctions too refined and fastidious. But let it be remembered we are only marking the limits of civil duty, and distinguishing between civil and spiritual authority. We shall applaud, and not quarrel with the Magistrate although he somewhat outstep the precise line of civil prerogative in his efforts to prevent external Sabbath desecration, and add his counsel, his prayers, and his general influence as a Christian to the enforcement of civil laws; only we must never concede the right to the Magistrate, as such, to enforce religious duties, strictly so called, or what are supposed to be religious duties, by the pains and penalties of civil legislation. We hope to have, in some measure, taken off the edge of this ecclesiastical calumny; and that the friends of the Establishment principle will no longer make misrepresentations on this subject.

Lastly,—Voluntaries are said to give countenance to infidelity by the tendency of their system.

“The infidel tendency of Voluntarism!” This language is in the mouth of all who would support the Establishment Principle, and yet they never condescend to tell where or how this infidel tendency is to be seen. A respectable father of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, who opened the Synod at Hamilton in 1846, by a sermon on Christ’s Headship, is perhaps as honest as any on this point. “Voluntarism breaks the chains which bind society to God.” And again in one of his letters in the *Banner* newspaper he says,—“The principle which sets aside national subjection to the powers that rule on high tends to Atheism.” These are gross and false, we shall not say, knowing well the natural generosity of the au-

thor, malicious calumnies. Perhaps, indeed, the Voluntaryism of those who employ such invectives,—Voluntaryism which all Scriptural Voluntaries abjure, does tend to infidelity. But the Voluntaryism we have defined in the language of Voluntaries,—the Voluntaryism of Christ and His Apostles, surely, can have no such tendency. It is to the Voluntary Principle of the Bible that we adhere, and we defy all our slanderers to show that we hold anything on it which the Bible does not sanction, and does not require: and we have no fear of inferences drawn from perversions and misrepresentations, although these may appear palpable to those who make them, and plausible to those who believe them without enquiry, or, perhaps, capacity or fortitude to think for themselves. We defy all proof that any sentiment of the Voluntaries, or that the grand distinctive Scriptural principle for which they contend, has the slightest tendency to Atheism. Nay, we hold that the tendency is the very reverse, and that, with the blessing of God, it is the surest principle, as it is the only correct principle, for the constitution of a Christian Church, and for advancing the glory of Christ, and the salvation of men.

“It breaks the chains which bind society to God.” This rash and groundless charge was certainly unworthy of the mind and heart of its author, (both of which we have long known to be of a superior order,) especially in the solemn circumstances in which it was first uttered. To us it appeared at the time to be little short of blasphemy, and we objected in the Synod to a vote of thanks for the sermon in which it was contained. Although in most of the grand principles in that sermon we entirely coincide, yet this expression is as if he had said, which we know he would never say,—Man’s plan of supporting and propagating the Gospel strengthens, but Christ’s plan breaks the chains which bind society to God. The author acted not only incourteously to brethren of Voluntary principles, who had come with conciliatory feelings to hear him but he did injury to his own church. For where is their Establishment? Where are their Endowments? Where are the chains which bind them to God? They still hold the Corn-

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pulsory Principle, yet act upon the Voluntary. How perilous must be their condition! And what should the judicious members of the Presbyterian Church of Canada think of this author, and of those, if any there be, who coincide in his sentiments, who would insult them by teaching that, although they should hold the Establishment Principle, they must act upon the voluntary; for no method is left them, in their altered circumstances, for maintaining the gospel at home, and sending it abroad, but to follow out a principle which "breaks the chains that bind society to God."

It is high time that the Presbyterian Church of Canada were "ceasing to pervert the right ways of the Lord," and were looking at Voluntaryism as it is,—not through the deceptive medium of their own misrepresentations. Many in Scotland were lately left to malign and persecute, with their utmost ingenuity and zeal, the Voluntaries around them, who, with their predecessors for more than a hundred years, had contended with fidelity and success, amidst surrounding darkness, for the kingly honours of Christ, and who, in more recent times, in answer to prayer, had clearer views imparted from on high, on the scriptural constitution, and entire independence of the Redeemer's Church. Not a few of those who made the honourable movement in which the Free Church of Scotland originated, and which soon afterwards led to the formation of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, were among the foremost and the loudest revilers of conscientious Scriptural Voluntaries. God in his gracious providence, by the late disruption, had one great lesson, among others, for this much misled, but evangelical portion of the Establishment, which, however, they have been but slow to learn. He intended to teach them by experience, yet with much mercy, that the principle which they reprobated, was sufficient for all the purposes of His Church. There was something of a retributive feature in this movement which has hitherto been overlooked. God in a most remarkable manner brought them into the very circumstances which they derided, and He has shown them in the course of a few years that this Voluntary Principle can do more for them, and for the interests

of Christianity at large, by a hundred fold, than ever could have been realized by the most favorable circumstances conceivable on their own principle of an Establishment. Where is the individual among them now, who with a heart thankful to God for his innumerable and unmerited mercies, and who after imploring in prayer and supplication the light of God's Spirit, should come forward and say that the Voluntary Principle is not the more excellent way? Will any minister among them reiterate the preposterous declaration,—“Voluntaryism breaks the chains which bind society to God.”

Again, “The infidel tendency of Voluntaryism!” “The principle which sets aside national subjection to the powers that rule on high tends to Atheism!” We shall not retaliate, though we might. We shall not say, at least try prove, the infidel tendency of the Establishment Principle! But certainly if it is not scriptural, as we maintain, and shall attempt to show, it can only tend to what is evil.* On its evil results, dismal and multifarious, volumes might be written, and perhaps it could be shown that thousands have been made formalists, hypocrites, Deists, and Atheists, through the influence of that unhallowed union of the Church and State which has so long prevailed, and for which there are still so many zealous contenders even among true believers and Gospel Ministers. But we have no wish to enlarge, nor do we deem it necessary; for this weighty slander is a mistake founded on a mistake,—a slanderous inference drawn from the other slanderous inference,—that nations are not under law to God, to which we have already replied. Till our friends come forward, and show on tangible grounds, that Voluntaryism as defined by them,—show us that the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, really does tend to infidelity,

* The following are the words of the Rev. B. Noel, on this subject,—“All history proclaims that the union (of Church and State), tried through long centuries of misrule, and found everywhere to be only potent for evil, should at length give place to Christ's own law of spiritual liberty, through which alone his churches can accomplish their beneficial mission, to bring the nations of the earth into the service of the Redeemer, and to make all intellects and all hearts tributary to his glory.”

we content ourselves by denying the charge, and shall hold those who continue to utter it as reckless slanderers.

Such are the current calumnies by which the opponents of the civil Establishment of religion are so often maligned. Their utterers only betray the weakness of their own cause by using them. The slandered feel these aspersions so unreasonable, and so inapplicable, that they scarcely think them "worthy of refutation."

When connected with churches whose ministers generally repudiated the civil Establishment principle, we were accustomed to hear of all those calumnies of which we have taken notice, but it never occurred to us that they deserved a reply. They appeared so groundless, and so malicious, as to carry their own answer along with them,—to be innocuous to the slandered, whilst those who sought to injure them were smitten by the weapons used—recoiling upon themselves, like the burning fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, which, instead of destroying the three children, for whom it was intended, destroyed those who cast them into the flames. But the matter is different now when many of the brethren whom we love, hold, or profess to hold, this Civil Establishment principle. Let them hold it, they are perfectly welcome for us. But we should be sorry that they had again recourse to such a system of slanderous misrepresentation in reference to ourselves or others who hold it not. It would degrade them not only in the estimation of those whom they so unjustly reproach, but of all right-hearted men. We wish to respect our brethren, and therefore wish them to respect themselves. Let them therefore no more utter and no longer even cherish, the slightest shade of sentiment of a calumnious nature. It is pusillanimous, it is disgraceful to utter such insinuations or even to foster those feelings in which they have originated. If they are not discontinued amongst us we shall certainly feel ourselves "in a wrong position," as a brother hinted,—in a company of calumniators. We know, however, that this is not the real character of our brethren; and that it can only be through inadvertency or mistake, that any of them can have uttered or

conceived such calumnies. We may be reviled by enemies, and brave it with pity or disdain, but when friends are the revilers it must inflict a poignant wound. This seems to be a natural principle, and it is touchingly verified in scripture in the case of David,—“it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it, neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him : but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance : we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company.”

We have endeavored to show that all these allegations of the friends of the Establishment Principle against the Voluntaries are groundless and false. It is therefore high time they were abandoned, and that those who have been accustomed to retail them should be silent, and consider how they can repair the many injuries they have done to their brethren in Christ. Possibly the Voluntaries may have cherished some hard thoughts, and even made some “hard speeches” against the other party, and may have, without intention, misrepresented their views. If so let them be informed, and we are sure they will most cheerfully retract anything that is wrong.

Having now endeavored to meet those calumnies which, we regret to say, have been repeated with shameless and sickening frequency, which should never have survived the happy disruption, and which should long ere now have been forgotten,—we shall proceed, more directly, to expose the unscriptural nature of the principle and practice of Civil Establishments, the essential feature of which is the endowment of the Church by the Magistrate. We feel this the more necessary as our friends, we fear, have been too ready to think themselves faultless whilst they attempted to scrutinize the faults of others : saying sometimes, if not in words, yet by deeds,—“ Brother let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when behold a beam is in their own eye.” And we do this too, because, having been entirely silent on this subject whilst it was made a matter of forbearance among us as ministers, at least a matter of forbearance with ourselves, and having determined to

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continue silent, deprecating the agitation of this question, especially as our brethren were willing we thought to bear with us,—we are now constrained to speak out, because they have agitated the question themselves by declaratory acts, inconsistent with this principle of forbearance, which procedure we are bound to oppose not only to fortify ourselves against compromise of principle, but from a concern to be faithful to Christ.

This, however, forms the subject of the next division of our Tract.

PART THIRD.

The Civil Establishment of Religion, which the power assigned to the Magistrate in the Westminster Confession may warrant, though it does not prescribe, is, in Principle as well as Practice, unjust and unscriptural.

THE Scripture argument for civil Establishments of religion was abandoned by the most respectable writers in their defence; and wherever it has been insisted on by others, it has met with such complete refutation as should silence for ever all attempts to renew it. We do not think it necessary to enter particularly on the proof that the practice of civil Establishments of religion is contrary to Scripture, for our friends in this country do not contend for the practice, but only for the principle. The practical question, indeed, might be resolved into one of moral justice. Is it right or wrong to extort money for the support of Gospel ordinances from those who use them not? Is it right or wrong to oblige the enemies of Christ, by civil pains and penalties, to support the religion of his friends? or the friends of one persuasion to support the religious system of another? This is but one view of the question; but in this view there is enough to condemn the civil Establishment of

religion as an outrage on that justice which men owe to each other, and especially which rulers owe to their subjects. This civil Establishment of the Church cannot belong to that religion which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the only standard of which is the Holy Scriptures. There every thing is opposed to it; and conformity to this perfect standard requires an unqualified and final renunciation of the slightest remnant of a practice so dishonouring to Christ, and so dismally injurious to the interests of religion.

It is deeply to be regretted that so many good men should still strenuously contend for a civil Establishment of the Christian Religion,—an idea so foreign to the Saviour's views (Matt. x, 9, 10,) when He first sent forth His disciples to preach His Gospel,—an idea, too, which never entered into the calculations of any of the inspired penmen of the Holy Scriptures. For more than three hundred years of the Christian era a civil Establishment of Christianity was unknown. It is a system of things obviously of heathen extraction. Its principle is Popish, or rather lies at the foundation of Popery. It was first adopted in the Church in the time of Constantine, by whom the “let,” or hinderance, to the revelation of Anti-Christ was “taken out of the way;” and by the consent of nations and generations, it has gained upon the credulity of the biased and the interested, who, looking into the Scriptures with a jaundiced eye, imagine that they there see the traces of a civil Establishment of religion, where there is no such thing; and where, from the exceeding great and precious promises—of protection, of provision, of peace, of extension, and of glory to the Church, it might readily suggest itself to the ingenuous and spiritually enlightened mind, that it was insulting to the Almighty Saviour to suppose that He was not able, without the aid of the State, to govern, to enrich, and to save, His own Kingdom.

It is, indeed, most wonderful that so many persons of talent, and learning, and piety, should so much deceive themselves, and unintentionally mislead others, by imagining, what they can never demonstrate, that the Bible gives countenance to a

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civil Establishment of religion. There is not the most remote shadow of foundation in God's Word for such a thing. A compulsory provision for religion, which is characteristic of all civil Establishments, is at best but an invention of men, and never did man invent any thing by which the King of the Church has been more dishonoured, and by which the interests of vital godliness have been more injured.

A few passages bearing on the question, should be examined with the humble, docile, and believing frame of Mary, when she sat at Jesus' feet and heard his Word. For as the honourable and Reverend Baptist Noel says, in the introduction to his most luminous and convincing Essay on this subject, which many of our brethren would do well to read and ponder—"On every subject we must hear Christ first, be guided by His judgments, and obey His decisions. To neglect to hear Him is to expose ourselves to a reckoning from which the boldest may well shrink. In the examination, therefore, of every question of right and wrong, our first step toward a just conclusion must be to learn what He has said. When the three Apostles were enshrined with our Lord in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, they heard from the depth of the oppressive splendour these words, 'This is my beloved Son, hear him?'"

It will accordingly be found (Ex. xxxvi., 4—7,) that the Tabernacle in the wilderness was reared, not by compulsory taxation, but by the free-will offerings of the people of Israel; and that their cheerful contributions required not to be stimulated but restrained. It will be seen (1st Chron. xxix., 1—19,) that for the building of the magnificent Temple of Solomon, there were no legal enactments. All was the result of free and spontaneous liberality. David gave of his own proper good. The chief of the fathers, and princes, and captains and rulers, "offered willingly." The signal to all was simply this,—“Who then is willing?” “They offered willingly, with perfect heart they offered willingly unto the Lord.”

The whole system of tithes among the Israelites, though of Divine prescription, and undoubtedly equitable, from its peculiar nature, was practised among the different tribes, “not by

constraint but willingly." The Priests had no authority to keep a vigilant watch for their portions, nor were the Rulers commanded to enforce payment. It appears (Mal. iii., 8—10,) that the tithes might be withheld, but that this being a sin directly against God, not against civil Rulers, exposed those who committed it to his awful judgments; and that the giving of the tithes, being a Divine ordinance, was to be practised in faith, and in the assurance of an enriching blessing.

With regard to the evidence of the New Testament for the voluntary support of the Christian Church, it is sufficiently copious in itself, and decisive of the question.

It is enough, one would think, to refer here to the ninth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where, from the ninth to the eighteenth verse, the Apostle Paul is most pointed and minute on the duty of the Church to support its Ministers, and where, besides expressly designating it an ordinance of Christ to do so, he employs figures and allusions by which it is impossible to mistake his meaning, and by which the very thought of a legal provision, must to every unprejudiced and serious reader, be regarded as an anti-Christian invasion on the order enjoined by the Church's Head.

The Scriptural evidence on this question might be exhibited in detail. But it is unnecessary,—and it may simply be remarked, that there is a danger, lest those who give countenance to this human invention expose themselves to two very serious charges:—First, to the charge of attempting to "add" to God's Word, as their system is not to be found in it; and, secondly, to the opposite charge of "taking away" from God's Word, as the operation of their system usually supercedes an express appointment of Christ:—"Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." Let those who, unthinkingly, have hitherto been the friends of this invasion on the prerogatives of Christ, consider his solemn testimony, expressing the danger of such conduct, as presented (Rev. xxii., 18, 19,) toward the close of the sacred volume, and let them honourably yield to the force of truth, renouncing every practice for which they have no Divine war-

rant, and for which they cannot point out a—"Thus saith the Lord." The truth is, the voluntary support of the Gospel is as much a Divine ordinance as the Lord's Supper is, and we might as consistently supercede or suppress the one as the other;—for "even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

It was well said by Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen, a Minister of the Established Church,—“Our only method is persuasion, not compulsion. The only terrors we set before men, are not the terrors either of the Magistrate, or of the mob; they are the terrors of the Lord, the dread of incurring the Divine displeasure, and the tremendous judgment of the world to come; as, on the other hand, the only allurements are the Divine promises. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Are those spiritual weapons now so blunted, that without the coarse implements supplied by human laws, they would be of no utility? Is it not most natural to think that a cause will be best supported by the same means by which it received its first footing in the earth? Ought there not to appear in the servant some portion, some traces of the spirit of the Master? Shall we think of any expedient for defending the cause of Christ, different from those which He himself and His Apostles so successfully employed? Nay, it were well if all that could be said were, that we employed different measures from those employed by them. Some of ours, I am afraid, on examination, will be found to be the reverse of theirs. Christ engaged by being lovely; we would constrain by being frightful. The former conquers the heart; the latter, at most, but forces an external and hypocritical compliance,—a thing hateful to God, and dishonourable to the cause of his Son.

“Christians in ancient times confided in the Divine promises; we, in these days, confide in Acts of Parliament. They trusted to the sword of the Spirit for the defence of truth, and the defeat of error; we trust to the sword of the Magistrate. God's promises do well enough when the Legislature is our surety. But if ye destroy the hedges and the bulwarks which

the laws have raised, we shall cry with Israel in the days of Ezekiel, Behold, our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off from our parts! There is no more security for the true religion! Protestantism is gone! All is lost! We shall be Papists presently! Shall we never reflect on the denunciation of the Prophet,—“Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord?” Let me tell those people, so distrustful in God’s providence, and promises, and so confident in the arm of flesh, that the true religion never flourished so much, never spread so rapidly, as when, instead of persecuting, it was persecuted, instead of obtaining support from human sanctions, it had all the terrors of the Magistrate, and of the laws armed against it. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy, are we stronger than he?”

Let no man therefore allow himself any longer to believe that there is the slightest warrant in the Bible for such a thing as a civil Establishment of the Christian Religion. It is an anti-Christian invasion. It is the very germ of the Man of Sin.

But it is not the practice, as we have said, but simply the principle of an Establishment for which our friends in this country contend, and therefore we shall look at the subject not so much as a practical question, as a mere theory. Were we sure it would always remain in this dormant state no harm could result from it. At the same time it should be remembered that the practice being, as we have already said, but the development of the principle, so whatever can be said against the practice must also militate against the principle. If the practice make the civil Magistrate the judge of what is true religion, or rather which of all the denominations of the Church is in nearest conformity to the Scriptures, the principle must concede this as his prerogative. If the practice is a refusal of the unfettered right to the subject to worship God according to his conscience, the principle would lead to this oppression. If the practice is unjust, so must be the principle. If the practice be unscriptural, the principle can be no where

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found in the Word of God. It is surely, therefore, a serious question,—Is it the duty, and can it ever be the duty of the civil government of a country, to support and propagate Christianity by the appropriation of public secular funds? Or is this, in any possible circumstances, a part of the Magistrate's civil functions? There are those, we know, and among them are not a few of the Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, who condemn all existing Establishments of religion, and who consider it unlawful to receive endowments from any existing governments. Nay, there are those who have honourably refused to accept of endowments and who have relinquished them, because the present government make the offer indiscriminately to Papists and Protestants. It is well that they have come thus far. Still they hold by the principle as in itself lawful. But it should be remembered that all that can be said against the general practice might be said against the principle under every modification. Even where endowments are surrendered or refused because the government bestow them "without reference to the distinction between truth and error," there is the concession, which we absolutely condemn, that it belongs to civil rulers to decide which of all the denominations is the true religion. There is in this, too, we regret to say, a clinging to the principle of an Establishment, conceiving that the State may yet be such in a religious view, as to make it lawful for the Church to receive endowments. But might it not occur to any reflecting person that were the government and population of the country thus spiritually improved the civil provision would be so much the less necessary. The necessity for endowment always supposes the languor or decline of religion; for Christians under elevated religious principle are always willing to give their support, and that probably beyond what is necessary to the Christian Church. We should therefore rejoice to see those who have favoured the Establishment principle coming forward like men, and declaring their absolute and utter opposition to civil Establishments of religion in all circumstances, both in theory and practice. It might well be asked on this subject,—When did the govern-

ment of any country endow only, we might almost say endow at all the true religion. Those who compare history with prophecy will grant that this has never been done. When first Constantine endowed the Church it ceased to be the true Church, and became corrupted by the throng of hypocrites, formalists, and worldly men, who crowded into its pale; and then the true Church began, unconnected with the State, to retire to the wilderness. This is a remarkable fact, which, when accurately studied, and understood, is the death-blow to Establishments of religion, in theory as well as practice, as having any place in the Word of God. But suppose a government to endow only truth, would that warrant the receiving of the endowment by a Christian Church? No: it would not. The truth is, that the principle of not receiving endowments from a government which endows both truth and error, is a maintaining that in some circumstances endowments are right, civil Establishments of religion right; and that it is only in the supposed present state of matters that endowments cannot be received with consistency. But we fearlessly maintain, and humbly defy all opposition, on Scriptural grounds, that endowments are wrong in every state of a government,—that even what might, with some plausibility be called a Christian Government, has no right, and no call, to endow the Church; and that the Church should refuse endowments from every government, and in every condition,—that even the best government endowing the best Church is an action unjust, injurious, unscriptural; and that the best proof that it is the best Church that has this offer made to it, may possibly be proved by its coming forward and giving a respectful and unqualified refusal to such an offer, and throwing itself simply and wholly on Christ, and Christ's people, for support and encouragement.

But as the practice of civil Establishments of religion is in our view wrong in all circumstances, so is the principle; and therefore the difference between the friends and the opponents of this principle is irreconcilable. There is no middle position between the parties. Forbearance is the only ground on which they can co-operate. Many of our friends, we rejoice,

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condemn all existing Establishments of religion, yet they cannot come the length of openly professing Voluntaryism. Still as they have no benefit from the mere principle of an Establishment, they take all the benefit of the Voluntary principle. They burden Voluntaryism for their support, whilst they disown it as their creed. They profess the Establishment principle, from which they obtain nothing; they repudiate the Voluntary principle, from which they obtain every thing. This has surely the appearance of trifling with a sacred matter. They come out from the Establishment in practice, but they do not come out in theory; and they go over to the Voluntaries in practice, but do not go over to them in theory. Their position in this respect remind us of the angel, in the Apocalypse, who set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and cried, as the original might be translated,—“The time shall not be yet.” They are saying,—It is too soon to leave the Establishment altogether. They were wholly on the sea when in the Establishment, and ready to be overwhelmed. Unwilling to leave it, yet desirous to find safety, they put only the left foot on the shore, leaving the other in the sea, if peradventure, by a change of wind or tide the sinking principle of an Establishment might yet be able to carry them. Better surely, we would say, to step at once fully on dry land,—where the rage of the ocean would not be able to overwhelm them. In plain language, it would be every way preferable to step over in theory as well as practice to the Voluntary principle. In our view they will never have a sure and Scriptural basis till they do so. May the Lord hasten in His time this honourable course. In the meanwhile, although it may not be evident to themselves, there is a danger that they appear to others to be halting between two opinions,—presenting what may be thought, by strangers to their sterling character, a cowardly indecision, and a want of due dependence on the Great Head of the Church, whose Kingly prerogatives they are so zealous to maintain. Let them give up this seemingly half measure, and go all the length, declaring themselves to be, exclusively, for Christ’s plan of supporting

and propagating the Gospel, in all circumstances of the Church, both in theory and practice.

The Establishment principle may be harmless as a theory. But it has in it the essence of injustice, and the elements of discord. It is a principle which we consider most dangerous in itself, subversive of the King's office of Christ, and altogether contrary to the Word of God. To allow the endowment of the Christian Church by the civil Magistrate to be lawful, is a principle which might in a short time paralyse, if not destroy, every legitimate and Scriptural effort for the support and propagation of the Gospel. It is surely an inconsistency to profess the Establishment principle, and yet to practise the Voluntary. For if it be the Magistrate's duty to provide for the Church, which we deny, why do Ministers among us, maintaining this doctrine, as we have heard them doing, endeavour by every possible means to arouse their people to raise money sufficient to support religion? Why, in particular, do they urge this as a Christian duty? If it be the Magistrate's duty, it is not the people's. But it is the people's duty, nay, their privilege, as some of the keenest defenders of the Establishment principle have been heard declaring, to support and extend the Gospel,—a duty surely of the opportunity of performing which they ought not by any arrangement to be deprived. But when the Magistrate interferes with his endowments, the people are robbed of this privilege, and prevented from performing this duty. What a clashing of sentiment! How incongruous do these views seem to be! Are we still to say, when the great schemes of the Church, sustained exclusively, by the free-will offerings of the Christian people, have been so signally blessed by God, that it is the duty of the Magistrate to provide for religion, and that it is lawful for him in any circumstances to apply the secular funds of the nation to this object? What ingratitude would seem to be indicated here to the Great Head of the Church, who has done so much for us, and what distrust in Him for the future! What a return would this be for the rapid growth of our Church in Canada, by the very means which this principle

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would set aside, and which with all our disposition to reject, have been so signally owned and honoured by Christ! and what might the people of our communion well say to us, if we still hold it to be the civil Magistrate's duty to endow the Church? When we press them for funds to carry on our schemes, when we urge them to contribute liberally to our Mission scheme, to our College scheme, and especially to the support of the Ministry, they might fitly turn upon us, and say—Apply not to us, but go to the civil Magistrate, whose duty you say it is to provide for the Church, and to employ the funds of the nation for the support of religion. The people would thus serve us as we deserve; and the sooner they do so are we the more likely to be brought to our senses on this subject, and initiated in the principles of Scriptural wisdom.

The views of the opponents of civil Establishments here are sound and Scriptural. They are the dictates of common sense, of common justice, of true philosophy. Theirs is the Bible plan. It is the plan of the Christian Church before it was corrupted by State incorporation. It is Christ's plan; and it is the people's duty, nay, their honour and privilege to follow it. And it is the plan which will carry forward and complete the triumphs of the Church, when the exotic and sinful views of the advocates of the civil Establishment principle are discarded, and, we trust, consigned to merited and everlasting oblivion.

In many other views this branch of our subject might be taken up. But we are disposed to leave it to the calm and candid consideration of serious persons. The subject is one which deserves to be studied by Christians; for this principle of a civil Establishment, which so many are still disposed to modify rather than renounce, has been a curse to the Christian Church, and, we might say, has occasioned the spiritual desolations of many generations. During the first three centuries, when no civil Establishments existed, the Word of the Lord grew and multiplied. It is true there were corruptions in the visible Church during these early times; and it would

be wrong to suppose that the civil Establishment of religion by Constantine the Great, originated all the departures from the Apostolic model. It is certain, however, that corruptions of a new and more formidable kind were introduced when Christianity was incorporated with the Roman State ; and, there is not a doubt that this unhallowed union was the cause. Chiefly was it found that by thus legalising Christianity the professing Ministers of the Gospel became ambitious, and worldly-minded ; and that multitudes who had no knowledge of Christianity, and no love to its doctrines and duties, crowded into membership with the Church. It has been the same in all ages as might be substantiated by a thousand proofs.

Even the principle of a civil Establishment of religion, in the most favourable circumstances, is a sacrifice of the Church's independence, and must be derogatory to the supremacy of Christ. It is beyond our power to conceive how some can reconcile their sincere and zealous testimony for the Kingly prerogatives of Christ, and the inherent right of the Church to be governed exclusively by His laws, with what has been justly and emphatically styled—"The Pagan principle of an Establishment."* These are opposite points, and altogether incompatible. No endowed Church is untrammelled by the State. The thing is impossible. It would, indeed, be unreasonable to expect it. If the State endow any portion of the Church, it has a right to know what that denomination teaches, and even to control its administrations. For why should it pay without determining what it pays for ? This was the original arrangement in regard even to the Church of Scotland. The State judged of its constitution and principles, before it adopted it as the Church of the Nation ; and nothing of that constitution, and none of these principles, has the Church, so es-

* See the *Christian Times*, No 28, published in London, in an article on the Free Evangelical Church at Geneva. The Rev. Baptist Noel makes use of similar language respecting the Establishment principle,—“The general practice, Pagan and Papal, but not Christian, can ill be pleaded in behalf of a principle which it illustrates only to brand it with eternal infamy.”

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established a right to alter without the permission and sanction of the State. To suppose that a Church may be endowed by the State, and at the same time independent of the State is Utopian. It never was; it never can be. To hold even the principle, which if reduced to practice would destroy the Church's independence, is surely an inconsistency in all who seek and value that independence.

If we would have perfect unity in sentiment, feeling, and action, we would say, and conclude by saying, in the words of the celebrated Dr. Wardlaw,—“Let every thing be removed out of the way for which the Word of the Lord is not pleaded, that tends to mar this unity, to impede this harmonious co-operation. Above all, let that unauthorised alliance of the Church with the State be broken up. On all the grounds that have been pleaded let it be broken up; and, especially, and primarily, on the ground of its contrariety to the constitution of the New Testament Church, as exhibited in the records of principle and practice given by inspiration of God. Let the authority of the Apostles be admitted paramount and permanent, and the cause is settled. I recur, in conclusion, to my grand fundamental principle. I have no fear,—I dare have no fear—of consequence, when I am satisfied of the Scriptural authority of my principles. Let them be proved unscriptural, and I shall instantly give to the winds all reasoning on other grounds. And, if on the contrary, their Scriptural authority has been satisfactorily established, let reasonings on other grounds against them be given to the winds by their opponents. Let Christians bring their controversies on this great question to the one and only authoritative test;—let them bring them to that test in the spirit of mutual love; for the more love the more candour, and the more candour the more agreement;—and let them bring them to that test in the spirit of faith in God, calmly, and resolutely determined, that whatever they find there they will follow, and that whatever they do not find there they will renounce, follow fearlessly—renounce fearlessly,—in the full assurance that what has God's sanction will have God's blessing,—and that what has not His sanction

and blessing can never prosper. If this be done, the union of the Church with the State must be abandoned ; for who pleads for it the authority of the Apostles ? Where, in their writings, is its pattern,—where its principle,—where even its anticipation, unless in the prophecies of the mystery of iniquity,—Babylon the Great ? With this Mystery of Iniquity it is wrapt up in a common doom ; the one and the other belonging to the same system. On all the parts of that system the doom may not light in the same manner, or with the same weight. But the system must fall. It must fall, that the Church may rise. The hour that dissolves her alliance with the world will be the hour of her salvation, in which the exulting address of the evangelical prophet will again become appropriate :—‘ Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.’ It will be the dawn of the Millennial day. The Church will be the light of the world.”

PART FOURTH.

The Defence of the Civil Establishment Principle, from the Power assigned in the Confession to the Magistrate in matters of Religion, is dishonouring to the Royal Prerogatives of Christ.

Driven from their usual course of attempting to defend the Civil Establishment of religion by the common arguments from Scripture, or even expediency, which have long been felt powerless and futile, the over-zealous friends of the Establishment Principle seem to have selected as their dernier resort, though we believe through inadvertency, a defence of their favourite principle from a perversion of a precious doctrine of Scripture,—forming a great department of the Messiah's Headship. Hence the lawfulness of Civil Establishments of religion has of late been maintained among us from what, we

apprehend, is an unscriptural view of the character and kingdom of the Mediator. Christ is said to be King of Nations, as well as King of the Church. We have no objections to this phraseology as it is Scriptural. But we object to its application to the Nations of the World geographically or politically considered, as unwarranted in reference to Christ as Mediator. On this last part of our Tract, as perhaps it is the most important, it is necessary to enter at considerable length, and with much serious concern for the orthodoxy of our Church.

The general doctrine of Christ's Headship is one of vital importance, and one on which it is most desirable that christians be not only of one mind, but that their views have scriptural accuracy. Now on the subject of Christ's Headship over the Church there seems to be no difference among the friends and opponents of civil Establishments. The latter perhaps witness for this great doctrine with more scriptural simplicity and purity than the former. For if Christ be the sole King of Zion, which both parties profess to believe, then where the most unfettered Kingly power is ascribed to Him, He is honoured the most. Let us see then which of the systems in this view gives the most unrestricted glory to Christ. Voluntary Churches give Him supreme and absolute authority, for they exclude all other power, and regard His kingdom as gloriously independent of all other kingdoms,—whether for guidance, protection, supply, liberty, or influence, and thus as requiring no foreign aid, but exclusively provided for, and entirely governed by Christ himself. Whereas Churches holding the civil Establishment principle, although they may be as strenuous in professing the supreme Headship of Christ in His Church, do, notwithstanding, ascribe Kingly prerogatives to Him with such reserve, though unintentional, as seriously affects that glory which is due unto His Name. They maintain that it is the duty of the civil Magistrate to provide for the Church,—that is they make Christ's kingdom, which they say is independent, to require the help of worldly kingdoms, to be unable to support itself, and obliged to implore assistance from

other kingdoms. That Divine Saviour who says "the silver is mine and the gold is mine,"—who, if hungry would not tell us, for the world is His and the fullness thereof, is, by this arrangement, presented as in circumstances of penury and want, and as looking for support to His everlasting kingdom, to the transient kingdoms of this world. His own exchequer is empty, at least is not sufficiently replenished to enable Him to carry forward the operations of His kingdom. What! is Christ, whose power is invincible, whose wisdom is unerring, whose resources are unbounded, thus left to court the favour of earthly potentates,—to cringe for shelter and supplies for His Church to the haughty rulers of this world? Must Christ, the King of kings, do fealty to the kings of the earth for His sceptre, as if his own resources were inadequate, as if He had not the hearts of all men in His hand, and could not incline and enable his own servants and people to give of their worldly substance all that was necessary for the outward support of His kingdom! Or, if that were insufficient, as if He could not make even the nations of the world, as He will at length do, without the constraining influence of civil rulers, to bring their wealth and their glory into the Church to advance His cause! This is one view in which, whilst the advocates of civil Establishments of religion are exalting with the one hand the royal prerogatives of Christ, they are left, unwittingly, to lower them with the other. Whether then, it may be asked, are the friends or the opponents of civil Establishments the most honourable and the most Scriptural testifiers for the Headship of Christ over His Church? Which most excludes human authority? Which most acts on the principle that the Church has no King but Jesus? Which best remembers that His authority is absolute and exclusive? Every thing, surely, that brings the Church under other influence must militate against His supreme Headship. The Church or kingdom of Christ is independent, absolutely independent of all civil authority. "It is for this independence that we make our stand. It is because we would not have it in any way, or in any measure, qualified that we disown and resist the Church's

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establishment by the State, for it is clear as day that such establishment involves, and must involve, a qualifying of this independence.”*

On the other department of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom, we were not aware till lately, some friends of the civil Establishment principle seem to have adopted what we think erroneous views, to which they attach “essential” importance. They call this His Headship over the nations. The opponents of civil Establishments, without objecting to this designation, prefer calling it, or rather calling the important doctrine which it misrepresents, Christ's Headship over the world, or the subsidiary department of His Mediatorial Kingdom,—comprehending all who are not believers, to distinguish it from His kingdom proper, or His Church. The difference between the parties here is, that the advocates of Establishments apply the designation,—King of nations in a manner which blends and confounds the two great classes of mankind,—believers and unbelievers, in relation to Christ; whereas the opponents of Establishments in speaking of Christ as King of the nations, or of the world, refer the designation to none who are members of the Church; but apply it only to those who have no gracious relationship to Christ. It is on that doctrine, in our view altogether gratuitous, which is called Christ's Headship over the nations geographically considered, or in civil matters,† that the theory of a civil Establishment seems by many to be founded. Christ is King of nations, we have heard it said, and therefore the civil rulers of nations should endow the Church. But we object to the premises here, as well as to the conclusion; and we would say, in the words of the Rev. B. Noel on another point,—“The cause must be desperate if able men

* The Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow.

† We suspect our friends have no fixed or distinct ideas on this subject. At one meeting of Presbytery, I heard a member say,—Yes, they meant nations geographically considered;—and at another meeting the same person said—They did not mean nations geographically considered, but nations in their civil matters. We do not see what difference this makes; and we equally object to both statements.

can find no better Scriptural evidence to support it." We are at a loss to know where the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, in this view, is to be found, except in the minds of those who have conceived it. It is no where presented in the Word of God. What is meant by it? Are we really to understand that Christ, as Mediator, is King of Great Britain, King of France, King of Spain, and King of every country on earth; and that He presides, or ought to preside, in all their political movements; and that the whole secular administration of every kingdom should be conducted as under His mediatorial government? Would not this be derogatory to Christ? Would not this stain or destroy the spirituality of His kingdom? Would not this be likening Him to the Pope of Rome, not now, but when in the plenitude of his power, by making Him at once a temporal and a spiritual Ruler? We put it to the judgment of every cool and reflecting individual if such a view of Christ's Headship over the nations does not tend to deteriorate rather than to advance His glory. We shall yield to none in honest and ardent zeal to ascribe all power and dominion and glory to the Saviour's Name: but we positively deny that the Scriptures give the smallest countenance to this conception; and we maintain that this is an interference with the outward concerns of nations which Christ, as Mediator, not only never sought, but uniformly disclaimed. Thus, when beset by enemies who wished to entangle Him in His talk, and to have something whereof to accuse Him, He showed Himself to be no pretender to earthly royalty, for, said He,—“Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.” It may be noticed that the very handle which the Jews made, when they insisted on the crucifixion of Christ, was from the pretensions which they alleged He had made to be King of the Jews, and thus a rival to Cæsar, who then swayed the sceptre of the Roman Empire, of which Judea was at that time a Province. Hence said the Jews to Pilate, in reference to Christ,—“If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend, whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.” We may add, that

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when arraigned before Pilate, and interrogated if He were the King of the Jews, He denied not that He was a King ; but to prevent all supposed interference between His kingly prerogatives and those of Cæsar or other earthly monarchs, He declared that His kingdom was entirely of a different description from theirs :—" My kingdom," said He, " is not of this world ; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence." Such were the lessons, on this subject, which the Saviour himself taught.

Those who hold that Christ is King of the nations of the world, as such, we suspect do not exactly mean what their words import. Some of them have told us they mean only that He is " King of kings and Lord of Lords," and of course if they keep by the language of Scripture, which they should do when they cannot express Bible doctrine otherwise, we entirely agree with them. But how often do we hear it said that Christ, as Mediator, is King of nations, meaning nations as to their geographical boundaries, and how often is it maintained that all the affairs of nations, civil as well as sacred, should be managed under Him as Mediator. Now it is this doctrine which we absolutely refuse. Viewing Christ as God, it is true, that in common with the other persons of the Godhead, He is the King of nations, and men in their national capacity are under His moral government, and bound to act under Him in civil and political matters, and to regulate every national interest as under law to Him. But as Mediator, although Christ's power is unlimited, and thus equally extensive with His power as God, yet it is only exercised in reference to His Church. It extends over the Church to guard, to guide, to supply, to bless, and it extends over all things beyond the range of the Church, to restrain and regulate, as He sees necessary, for preventing injury and securing benefit to His people.

Let us not be misunderstood ; we are not denying the supremacy of Christ over the whole world ; we are not denying that the affairs of nations whether sacred or secular are under

His control and direction, and that He overrules and manages them for the interests of His Church ; nor are we wishing to set nations free from the obligations which all men in them are under to acknowledge and embrace Christ for salvation, and to conduct their duties of whatever kind in subserviency to His glory. But we are objecting to the phraseology that nations and civil rulers, as such, (that is irrespective of being christians) are under law to Christ, so as to be capable of, or called to active service for Him as Mediator. There have been views presented on this subject against which we would do well to guard, because they are not only contrary to scripture, but repugnant to reason itself. We are never to imagine with some good people that all outward things in the kingdom of nature and providence, as an eminent divine* of last century expresses it,—“considered in their material being, as obvious to common sense, and considered in their natural ordering to their natural ends, were transferred to the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ,” because it would follow from this that all outward blessing enjoyed “by unbelievers through the world, as well as by believers were properly from Christ as Mediator, and through the channel of His blood.”

It is necessary to distinguish between the kingdoms of nature and of grace, and about the administration of Christ being conducted in a suitableness to the nature of the one and of the other. “If it be said” says the same author, “that all outward things of this world in themselves considered, and in all respects, do belong to the Kingdom of Christ as Mediator, which is all a kingdom of grace, we absolutely reject this doctrine, as not only without foundation in scripture, but as contrary both to scripture and reason, and what greatly derogates from the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He is God over all blessed for ever, and likewise as bringing a cloud upon His glory as Mediator.”

The following additional observations on this important subject, made by the same venerated father, and which have al-

* The Rev. Adam Gibb of Edinburgh.

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ways been held in the Church of which he was one of the earliest founders, will serve to present it in a scriptural light.

“1. All divine prerogatives and administrations, are to be ascribed to Him who is our glorious Mediator, though all must not be ascribed to Him as Mediator. And there is no controversy here, about what glory belongs to Christ, but only about the different respects in which all glory belongs to him. For our Lord Jesus Christ, considered as God and considered as Mediator, is still one and the same person: wherefore an ascribing of some things to Him as God, and of other things to Him as Mediator, is not an ascribing of these different things to different persons, but an ascribing of all to one and the same glorious person.

“2. There ought not to be a confounding of our Lord's Divine and Mediatory glory, or of his essential and acquired glory,—for this must be a detracting from His Godhead. And to suppose as if all glory, or glorious characters and administrations, which are ascribed to Him in Scripture, were to be understood of Him as Mediator,—is to deny His Godhead.

“3. There are rights and prerogatives of Christ's Godhead, in the government of this world, which cannot be suspended, or superseded, as to the exercise thereof. It is inseparable from his Godhead to govern the world of his creatures while He sees meet to preserve the same, and that by an ordering all natural things of the world in their natural course, to their natural ends,—by ordinary and common providence. And, therefore, to suppose as if all this common providence were now transferred over to Christ's mediatory capacity and kingdom, is to suppose as if a divine administration, which is inseparable from His Godhead, were laid aside, for giving place to a mediatory administration, which would be a material denying or degrading of His Godhead.

“Moreover, the same administrations materially considered, are, in different respects, to be ascribed unto Christ both as God and as Mediator. For each of his administrations in so far as it was preparatory unto, proceeds upon, or is introduced by a satisfaction to law and justice,—must be ascribed unto

Him as Mediator: but the same administrations, in so far as they bear any other respects must be ascribed to Him as God. Thus, particularly, the judgment of ungodly men, considered as it terminates in their perdition,—be'ongs to Him as God. But the same judgment, considered as it terminates in a vindicating the glory of His despised grace, or in a displaying of His glory as God-man, or in exalting the triumph of his people,—doth belong to Him as Mediator.

“4. The Mediatory Kingdom of our Lord Jesus is not of this world; and this holds true, concerning the same, absolutely, or in all respects. Thus though his Mediatory Kingdom is in this world,—and the things of it are things of this world, yet no outward things whatsoever, considered as things of this world, or worldly things, can be justly looked upon as belonging to His Mediatory Kingdom; or as belonging to Him, upon a right of donation and purchase: nor was such a donation and purchase either needful or competent to him who is over all, God blessed forever. But the gracious and supernatural ordering of outward material things, unto gracious and supernatural ends,—in a channel of love and favour to his people, and with a subserviency to the purposes and glory of free grace in their salvation. All such ordering of these things, or those considered under the formality and in the channel of such gracious orderings,—are of a quite different consideration, being not of this world, though in it, or not of a worldly nature. And thus, according to our Confession of Faith (chap. v. 7). ‘The providence of God, after a most special manner, taketh care of his Church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof.’”

In these judicious remarks we substantially concur; and in further confirmation of our sentiments on this subject we find that the word *nations* in Scripture, as referring to Christ's Headship, is not to be understood of geographical boundaries or civil matters, at all; but is employed to denote the world as distinguished from the Church,—All things out of his Church, over which power is given to Him as Mediator in subserviency to the interests of His Church. Hence the word *nations* very often signifies Gentiles or heathen in scripture, and we

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believe that this is its uniform meaning in any connection it has with Christ's Headship. For instance where it is said—"Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations," it might as well be rendered O King of the Gentiles, or O King of the Heathen. In every instance, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the Hebrew and Greek words are, at the will of the translator, in this manner indiscriminately rendered—nations, gentiles, or heathen, shewing that they signify the Gentiles or heathen, as distinguished from God's people Israel, or which is the same thing, the world as distinguished from the Church,—and representing the Saviour as having control over what is out of the Church, as well as having the special government of the Church itself.

We apprehend, however, that it is from the New Testament chiefly that we are to discover the power of the Mediator extended over the world. In the Old Testament the descriptions refer to the Godhead, or at all events to Christ as Divine. It is in the New Testament that we find power over all things directly conferred on Christ as Mediator between God and Man. Thus he says,—“All power is given unto me in heaven and upon the earth.” But it will not be difficult for the careful reader to perceive that the Kingly authority of Christ over the world is something different in its nature, exercise, and ends, from his Kingly authority over His Church. The Scripture view is that whilst in the Church Christ reigns, and is obeyed, his power extends to all besides his Church, yet only for the Church's interests: He is head over all things “to his Church,”—that these may be made subservient to his glory in the salvation of his Church. It is to rule over the Church that He is her King. But He is King of the world not to rule over it in the way of requiring obedience to his laws, but to keep it under such subjection and control as may be necessary for the Church's good. The world is not subjected to Him to serve and obey Him as the Church does, for this it cannot do, it is simply placed under His control, that passively and involuntarily, as he sees meet, it may be made the instrument in furthering his gracious purposes. Thus Pharaoh and the

Egyptians, and Cyrus and the Persians, although they neither knew nor acknowledged God the Saviour, were made subservient to His gracious purposes to His ancient Church: and thus under the New Testament dispensation "the things which happened to Paul," are said "to have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel." "The earth" is said to have "helped the woman:" and so prosperous was the christian religion when its friends were subjected to the most furious persecutions that it became proverbial, and was found true, that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." No doubt the Nations ought to obey Christ, that is they ought to become christians. But even the numerous predictions of Nations or Kingdoms serving Christ, as in Psalm seventy-second,—“All nations shall serve him,” are descriptive, not of the things which are, but of the things which shall be hereafter; and before such willing service can be rendered it is evidently supposed that they shall no longer be “reckoned among the nations,” but shall be “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith.”

The doctrine of Christ's Headship over the world is not so much a separate doctrine, we apprehend, as a subordinate part of His Headship over the Church. Our Saviour properly speaking has but one Kingdom, that is His Mediatorial Kingdom, which has been in progress since the first age of the world, and which will advance till it is consummated in the bringing in of the chosen of God of the latest generation, and in Christ's presenting all his redeemed unto himself “a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” In carrying forward the interests of His Church Christ has all things out of it, as well as all things within it, brought under His subjection. What is without is His superintendence and control of creatures in general for the good of His Church, whether these be friends or foes. It is His government over angels, who are “ministring spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation:” and it is His control over Devils and wicked men, who are held by Him under due restraint to prevent them from injuring His Church, and

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even to make them, though unwillingly, and often unknowingly, the instruments of His glory. These agents of general providence whether hostile or friendly to the Church, are used by Christ only as scaffolding for rearing it, and when the great building of mercy is finished this department of the Mediatorial Kingdom (as we find 1st Cor. xv., 24.) shall be resigned by Christ, and placed under the general government of Jehovah.

We think it neither sound logic, nor sound theology, but a confounding of the necessary distinction between the Church and the world, to speak of Christ as some of the advocates of civil Establishments do, being King of Nations considered as to their geographical limits, and in their political and civil concerns. Nations, indeed, in these views are bound to honour and glorify God, and to regulate their proceedings by the rules of His word, and in all things to conform to His will. All bodies of men are bound to obey God, and are under law to God. But this is not from any connection with Christ as King of Nations. It is simply as rational and accountable beings, and as under the great law of morality. True there is a connection with Christ extending to the whole human race. The gospel offer is made indiscriminately. Salvation is needed by every human being, and is for each a suitable provision. All to whom the word of this salvation is sent are bound to believe the gospel, and to accept of Christ as their Saviour. And as he is universal Lord and King, as, either by constraint or willingly, every knee shall bow to him, so the whole human race shall at last appear at his judgment-seat. But to speak of Nations in the sense of the Civil Establishment advocates, being under law to Christ, is saying more than the Scriptures warrant. Nations in this sense may be said to be under law to God, as the Moral Governor of the universe, and thus to Christ in His Divine nature. But excepting those of His people who are under the influence of grace, they cannot with theological accuracy, be said to be under law to Christ. For although Christ is God, yet the name Christ, that is the Anointed, refers to His official character, in which He stands in covenant relation only to his Church. His connexion with others is not a

covenant connexion. They are not under his gracious and benignant spiritual sceptre as the Messiah. "He never bare rule over them: they are not called by His name."

It ought to be considered that although all men are by nature under the moral government of God, which is the law of works, yet believers only are under law to Christ, or, in scripture phraseology, "under the law to Christ," or under "the law of Christ,"—which law is, indeed, in substance the same as the law of works but different in form, having relation to the covenant of grace, or as the excellent Boston has remarked in his Notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity,—“By the law of Christ is meant the same law of the Ten Commandments as a rule of life in the hands of a Mediator to believers already justified.”

Nations and their rulers in their civil capacity cannot be considered as under the direct and positive government of the Messiah, as bound to regulate all their measures in immediate allegiance to Him, and as governed by Him in the same manner, and capable of actively serving Him, whether in a state of nature or of grace. This doctrine, held by some, and seemingly held by the advocates of Establishments, is objectionable on several accounts,—particularly, as it destroys the line of demarcation between the Church and the world, as it seems to suppose civil society to originate not in nature, but in grace, and as it is quite at variance with Christ's own declaration, before referred to,—“My kingdom is not of this world.”

Some learned divines, as Turretine, Mark, and others, consider the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ as comprehending only His Church, over which He reigns as Head; and consider His government over others as only in his Divine nature. But whilst the whole earth, in its many nations and kingdoms, is under Christ's government as the Lord Jehovah, and that in things secular, as well as things sacred, and whilst it is only the Church that is under his direct government as Messiah the Prince, yet His mediatorial power is not only over the Church, but over all other things for the Church; and thus the world, as distinguished from the Church, is under subjection to Christ

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The term nations is, indeed, often used in Scripture to denote the geographical boundaries of different tribes and kingdoms ; but never, as we have said, so far as we know, is it thus used in connexion with Christ's Headship ; and it ought to be known and remembered that the character of nationality to religion, or the Church was abrogated for ever with the Mosaic economy. To speak of this Church and nation,—the Church and kingdom of Scotland, the Church and kingdom of England, the Church and kingdom of Ireland, like some of our reforming fathers, emerging from the darkness of Popery, as if to identify the Church and the nation, is altogether unwarrantable. Such language, which is even to be found in some documents connected with the Confession of Faith, is of the essence of Popery, and so is the civil Establishment of religion in Protestant countries which has sprung from it. The Israelites were both a Church and a nation, and although many attempts have been made to homologate, in this manner nations and Churches under the Gospel dispensation, after the ancient model, yet the object has never been realised, nor was it intended that it ever should. No nation succeeded to the privileges of God's ancient people, excepting true believers of every country, who are emphatically called—"A holy nation." Those who do not belong to this spiritual community are the world as distinguished from the Church,—the nations of which Christ has supreme control for the Church's good.

Nations or civil communities, as such, are not necessarily under law to Christ, although within His mediatorial kingdom. So far as individuals belonging to them are believers they are under the law to Christ ; so far as they are unconverted, although in subjection to Christ, not by consent of their own, but by right of His,—in subjection to Him to be restrained and controlled as He sees meet, yet they are simply to be considered as under the moral government of Jehovah. They are still under the law as a covenant of works. They are among

the things of which the Apostle speaks, when he says,—“We see not yet all things put under Christ.”

In regard to civil representatives of nations who are hostile to Christ, they are commanded to be wise, to be instructed, to serve the Lord, to kiss the Son,—that is, to become believers, to come under law to Christ; and it is their duty and their interest to obey these Gospel calls. But as has been well remarked by Dr. Wardlaw,—“It was not as kings merely, it was as sinners they were in danger of perishing, and it was as sinners, not as kings, that they were commanded to kiss the Son that they might escape His kindled wrath. Jehovah who in the beginning of the Psalm laughs at the puny efforts of their vain and weak audacity, does not at the close of it bespeak the aid of their official functions, but warns them of their own danger, and, for their own sake, admonishes them to timely submission. It was not by making Christianity the religion of their dominions, and becoming the heads and patrons of Established Churches, that they were to effect their escape and security, but by a personal faith in Christ, and a personal submission to His reign.” Civil representatives, till they comply with these Divine mandates, are still of the world, and cannot truly and acceptably acknowledge Christ.

But on the other hand, when civil rulers are Christians, they are “under the law to Christ.” It is, however, even in their civil capacity, not as King of nations; but as King of the Church, that they are under law to Him; and although even now it does not fall within the range of civil duty, considered abstractly, though it may very suitably accompany it, to acknowledge Christ, yet their whole deportment in the discharge of civil, as well as sacred duty, will be a practical acknowledgment of Christ, because it will be conducted on the principles, and in the spirit of Christianity. We repeat that civil rulers, unless they are Christians, are not under law to Christ. They are under law to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the Moral Governor of the universe.

Our friends who speak of the duties of nations and Magistrates to endow and establish the Christian Church most cer-

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tainly attempt to unite what God keeps separate,—to unite the world lying in wickedness to the Redeemer's spiritual kingdom,—supposing that Magistracy, and national jurisprudence, and thus all civil and political measures, are under Christ as Mediator, or in covenant relation to Him, an idea by which they would overshadow the glories of Christ's essential Divinity in their zeal to honour Him in His economical character as Mediator between God and Man. But it should be known and remembered that the duties of nations and rulers are independent of the arrangements of grace, and belong to the grand and essential principles of morality; and, as has been well remarked,—“There is nothing allotted to Magistrates by the Word of God, but what can be argued for and defended from natural principles.”* We allow, however, that if the Magistrate be a Christian he will have new light, new motives, and new ends, in the discharge of his civil duties, and, especially, he will seek thereby to glorify God, as well as to do good to men.

One very absurd consequence, among others, which follows from the view of Christ's Headship over the nations, as held by the friends of civil Establishments, is that in a Christian country, we mean a country where Christianity has made some progress, those who are genuine believers are supposed to be under the Saviour's administration, both as He is King of the Church, and as He is King of the nation. The Magistrate, for instance, if a Christian, is subject to Christ as King of the Church, we are told, in all sacred things, and only, it is supposed in these things; and when he passes into the civil Court, or is engaged in secular duties, he is conceived to be a subject of Christ as King of nations. This we think too absurd an idea to need refutation; and we were confounded to hear one of the most sensible of our brethren seriously ask if we supposed that when the Christian Magistrate went from the Church to the Senate-house he should throw aside all regard to religion. “Surely not,” we said, “for he is as much under law to Christ

* See Answers to Nairn's Reasons of Dissent.

as King of the Church when in the Senate as when in the Sanctuary." The truth is, the Christian Magistrate is only a subject of Christ as King of the Church; and he is as much a subject of Christ in this view when he is discharging civil duties, as when he is employed in the direct duties of religion. In both positions he is to act in all things as a Christian, as a citizen of Zion, and as a subject of Zion's King. Yes, in conducting his civil administration he is to act religiously, he is to deliberate and judge and decree for the glory of God, and in conformity to his Christian obligations, and his allegiance to Christ as King of the Church.

The friends of civil Establishments, we fear, attempt to make by far too much of their testimony for Christ as King of nations. They mean we know to honour Christ, but no doctrine can honour Him unless it be Scriptural, and held Scripturally. The false notions we are combating seem to have arisen out of the unfortunate position in which our brethren have been placed as connected with an endowed national Church. We can hardly expect those who have had the faithfulness to come out of endowed Churches, all at once to emerge from the influence of early views, and to discover the incompatibility of the very principle of a civil Establishment of religion with the constitution of the Redeemer's kingdom. But since some of them have been so much accustomed to misrepresent the opinions of conscientious opponents of civil Establishments of religion, it is but fair that their own views be brought to the test of Scripture; and if we cannot find them there, surely, it is to be devoutly wished that all who would be consistent Christians, and would give the great Redeemer that glory to which He is entitled, be warned against such errors. We, however, cherish no spirit of retaliation, but wish only this subject to be examined with calmness, and inadvertencies, for they are nothing more, to be exposed, for the good of those who have fallen into them, or are ready to be misled. The views then of Christ's Headship over the nations, which some friends of Establishments have incautiously professed, and seek to identify with their standards, is one of

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which we would do well to beware, as it is both preposterous in itself, and might involve its advocates in many unwarranted consequences. That an attempt should be made to introduce it into the creed of the Church is most astonishing, as it is not only contrary to the Word of God, but as is very remarkable, not even to be found hinted at in the Confession of Faith. It should surely, therefore, not be considered an "essential" doctrine, at least in the usual acceptation of that word. It may be essential for the defence of civil Establishments, which appears to us to be its only use, but we would have more charity for those who hold it than to suppose they approached so near a Popish error as to suppose it essential to salvation, for this we imagine would be to unchurch almost all but themselves, and to insinuate that there could be no salvation beyond the pale of their Church. Our opinion is that all that is essential in respect to Christ's Headship over the Church and over the world, is brought down to the capacity of children, and is summarily and orthodoxly presented in the answer to the question,—How doth Christ execute the office of a King, in our Shorter Catechism. There we have Christ's Proper Kingdom,—the Church, the members of which being subdued to Himself, He rules and defends; and His Subsidiary Kingdom,—the world, still hostile to Him, still incapable of willingly serving Him, which He restrains and conquers. He does not require duties of allegiance from the latter. They are in no capacity to render them. They are called to no duty for Christ. They are only called to one great duty for themselves;—it is to believe on Christ to salvation. If they do this the restraining and conquering influence is over, so far as they are concerned, and they are subdued to Christ, and thenceforward ruled and defended by Him. The yoke of power over them as enemies is removed; the yoke of peace and love,—Christ's yoke which is easy, and his burden which is light, is now taken up by them; and from being subjected to Christ as King of nations, that is of the world lying in wickedness, for the good of the Church, they become the willing and joyful subjects of His spiritual and everlasting kingdom.

Those who are, or become, believers spontaneously and joyfully, obey Christ. They surrender themselves to Him with cheerfulness and delight, and consecrate themselves without reserve to his service. But unbelievers, not capable of, and not called to active service, are only made subject, and made subservient, and that in opposition to their own inclinations by the authoritative influence of His restraining and conquering power as Mediator. This we think is the only true and Scriptural view of Christ's supremacy over the Church and over the world; and it at once overthrows the whole theory of the advocates of civil Establishments of religion, and dooms it to merited oblivion. God requires no service to Christ from unconverted men. They are not in circumstances to render any. He calls them to believe. He invites them to flee from the wrath to come, and to accept of Christ for salvation. This is the first, and the only duty which they are invited to reduce to practice; and whenever they believe to the saving of the soul, whether rulers or subjects, they come out from the world, they rank no longer among the nations; they enter Christ's Church, are brought under the influence of His spiritual sceptre, and are made joyful subjects of His proper and peculiar kingdom. In the meantime Christ's prerogative as King of nations, that is, of the unconverted, is for special purposes,—purposes, however, very different from those of countenancing, protecting, and endowing the Church. It is given Him that He may check or allow hostility to the interests of religion as He sees meet,—to illustrate His sovereignty or His power. This prerogative is conferred on Him as Mediator. Hence the declaration of God by the Psalmist, in respect to Christ,—“Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” And hence the description in the Revelation,—“Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” These unconverted nations are no instruments of active and willing service to the Church; but unless restrained by Christ would be causes of injury and danger.

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kingdom only until His Church be completed. He shall then deliver up the kingdom, not His kingdom proper, but only His subsidiary kingdom, to God even the Father, when He shall put down all rule and all authority and power. But over His peculiar kingdom, the Church, He shall reign eternally. "Of the increase of his government and dominion here there shall be no end."

CONCLUSION.

It is much against our will that we are in a manner constrained to defend thus publicly our sentiments. In doing so we feel an anxiety for the improvement, progress, and increasing usefulness and influence of the Church to which we belong. If we are plain and particular in pointing out what we conceive to be defects in their present ecclesiastical constitution, and in warning against further error and danger, to which we fear they are exposing themselves, if we are warm in urging them to retrace their steps, and to take the perfect "pattern of the mount" for their model and their motto,—we hope our friends and brethren will believe that we speak in the sincerity of our heart, that we seek nothing but their real benefit, and that we study to feel an abiding sense of our own responsibility to God.

We assure those who differ from us that we do so in the spirit of Christian love; and at the same time that we do not consider all the difference, though it is by no means unimportant, as sufficient to warrant separation, provided the forbearance which we willingly exercise continues to be reciprocated; and this forbearance is the only way, and it is the Scriptural way, that Christians differing on circumstantial matters like these, can be found obeying the Apostolic mandate of—"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We have felt it our duty to present the preceding views, regretting that there is so little inclination among the friends of

Establishments to look at the subject with impartiality and seriousness, so much seeming desire to mistake it for something else than it is, and so great a disposition to mis-state or misrepresent the plain and obvious meaning of words, and thus to mistify and perplex where all is so simple, and where nothing is sought but to vindicate and preserve the whole counsel of God, which we should never shun to declare. This seems to us the more unaccountable and astonishing from our acquaintance with the genuine Christian character of those to whom we refer, and their active and honourable zeal to advance the best interests of religion.

To such brethren whom we sincerely love, and consider among the excellent ones of the earth, we would by no means appear in the character of an opponent. We would not even have appeared to differ from them had they not called us forth by enactments contrary to our views to which we could not silently submit, and thus made it necessary for us to speak out in defence of Bible principles, which we believe they have never fully considered, and which they oppose only because they do not understand. Could we make the truth of these principles, their perfect accordance with the Word of God, as apparent to their understanding as to our own, could we take the scales of prejudice from the eyes of their minds, could we divest them of preconceived notions, imbibed probably through some false medium in their early education, could we disengage them from the imperfect lessons of human teachers, and bring them fully and exclusively to the feet of Christ for the instructions of His Word and Spirit, we verily believe that on the points of dispute they would begin to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints."

We are thus thoroughly convinced that our brethren aim at nothing but evangelical purity and consistency, and that they dread as much as ourselves the slightest departure from "the simplicity that is in Christ." We shall bear with them therefore whilst they bear with us. We do not insist that they adopt our views, as an honest elder supposed, and we have no objections that they retain their own. We must, however,

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repel every attempt, unaccompanied with reason and Scripture to induce us to identify ourselves with such deliverances as we think unwarranted, not only by the accredited standards, but by the Word of God.

It may be long, it may be a generation, before the Presbyterian Church of Canada surmount the prejudices of early education, look at Divine Truth through the medium of Scripture alone, and are altogether what they profess to be—A FREE CHURCH. But such is our humble conviction of the Scriptural nature of our own principles, and such, especially, is our high idea of the rectitude of our brethren's motives, and of their pure and zealous desires for the glory of Christ, that we are persuaded they will seek and obtain Divine direction, and be enabled to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the meantime, should any views in this Tract be different from those which are current in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, they must blame themselves, if blame there be, for calling for enquiry into our sentiments, and the Presbytery of Hamilton must take blame for publishing vague reports which gave no information, but only excited curiosity and enquiry, and even suspicion among some of the ignorant, and which at all events, render explanation necessary. We believe that our sentiments will bear the test of the strictest scrutiny; and we humbly challenge all and any of our brethren who may differ from us to sustain their own views, or to refute ours by the unerring standard of the Word of God.

The Editor of the *Banner*, in the last number of that spirited periodical, which did so much good to the cause of religious liberty, and the discontinuance of which is deeply regretted by many, is pleased to remark that more votes will be given to our views "the next time, for the country will be awakened on this question from Dan to Beersheba. We are not so sanguine as our friend, although we believe that sooner or later the principles we advocate will pervade the public mind. But even were we in the meantime to be borne down among our brethren, as at last Synod, by general opposition, which deeply

rooted prejudice, or blind bigotry, alone could instigate, yet which we do not anticipate, and could not dread,—we would, nevertheless, await in humble expectation the ultimate triumph of our principles. In that case we would feel satisfied and honoured to be assured of having the blessing of Gad, the son of Jacob—"A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last."

There is nothing, however, after all that divides evangelical Presbyterians but the Establishment question; and this should not divide them; for it is a matter on which there has been, and must be forbearance;—otherwise the forbearance which the Scriptures inculcate is completely violated. We do not see that Christians are in the exercise of forbearance at all if they cannot forbear with each other on this question. It is a great question indeed, and closely connected with the interests of religion, and with the prospects of the Church; but still, from the different constitution of minds, it is one on which diversity of opinion may be entertained, and yet the Christian character not be impeached. Both parties are seeking the same great object—Truth. Were they but to explain their words and phrases, with calmness, with clearness, with kindness, it is more than probable that their differences would diminish in number and in bulk, and that instead of rearing between each other obstructions apparently formidable and insurmountable, instead of a Tower of Babel scattering them from each other, the real differences would be divested of their "hazy" accompaniments, and become so inconsiderable as to require no charity, no hesitation, no effort to surmount them.

As present, so far as we understand, there is no expectation, and no great wish for union, either on the side of the Presbyterian, or of the United Presbyterian Church, nor, however anxiously it be sought by individuals on both sides, it is now likely to take place, until some better understanding be brought about. What shall we advise? The Committees are still continued on both sides. We should think that each Synod should discharge its Committee for a time. At all events unless the Presbyterian Synod recall some of the deliverances of its

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last meeting, all hope of a union with the United Presbyterian Synod is taken away, and, we should fear, that division at length among themselves is inevitable. We should be sorry were the Presbyterian Church of Canada thus to shut themselves up in the close prison of sectarianism. Standing as they formerly did, as we thought, on the broad basis of the Confession of Faith, allowing it to be received with reasonable limitations, they might have forborne with Christian brethren in any difference on the circumstantial doctrine of the power of the civil Magistrate in matters of religion. Being that on this point the compilers of this invaluable work contradict themselves. But now that they have over-reached their own standards, and embodied some of their peculiar views in their public documents, proposing to make them terms of Ministerial fellowship, all negotiation for union with other bodies, especially with the United Presbyterian Church, is out of the question. They might negotiate for a century, and be no nearer their object at the end than at the beginning. The principle of mutual forbearance must be restored and upheld. This principle, on all that divides these Churches in this country, should have been recognised and acted on from the beginning. The negotiations for union should have been conducted with this understanding. Human nature required this; Christian courtesy demanded it. This principle, we are persuaded, will yet unite these two denominations in Canada. But before that happy consummation, there must be more humility, more light, more love.

We should still be disposed to hope that after all there is little more than a Tower of Babel, or confusion in language, between the parties.* We can hardly think that men of en-

* Some of our friends may wonder that we have taken no notice of the *Mare Magnum*, alleged to lie between the parties. But we leave that to the Synod: for as they cannot deal with us till they first deal with the Presbytery, so they cannot touch the TOWER OF BABEL till they come across the *Mare Magnum*. Besides, we thought it better to confine ourselves to the Battlements of the Tower of Babel, as some suppose the Post-deluvians intended to do, to escape the ravages of another *Flood*.



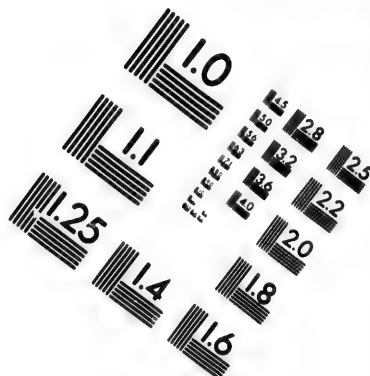
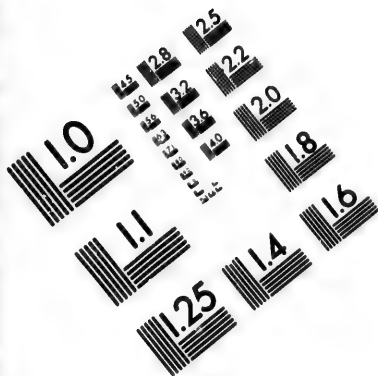
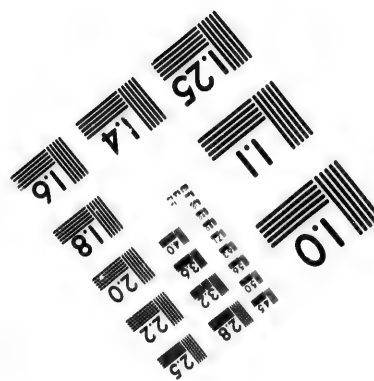
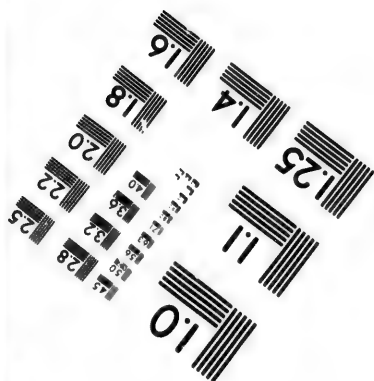
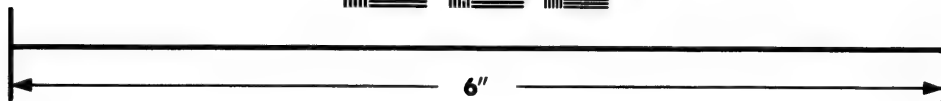
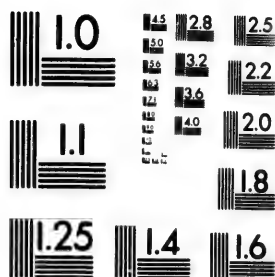
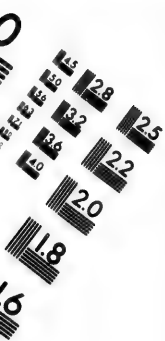


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lightened piety, and thorough conscientiousness, which we believe our brethren of the Presbyterian Church of Canada to be, can, in reality, entertain the views which some of their own documents convey to our mind. We indeed know this to be the fact, and believe that the difference is more apparent than real, and might easily be reconciled by correcting this confusion in language,—by overthrowing this Tower of Babel.

As for ourselves, we shall take all the liberty we have ever claimed of acting on our own principles,—even although this should oblige us for a time to leave them,—trusting that harmony may yet be restored, and the obnoxious deliverances repealed. Convinced that the Presbyterian Church is conscientious and faithful according to its light, we shall wait patiently to see what Providence and what Grace may do for it,—believing that when God's time comes, which we hope is not distant, to liberate it from those prejudices that now perplex and fetter its operations, and to lead by His Spirit to greater conformity to the pure model of His Holy Word, it will become in a far higher degree than ever, the honoured instrument of salvation to souls, and of glory to Christ.

In this hope we would close by making a few hasty observations on the scope and references of the views presented in this Tract. The friends of the Establishment principle look back to Knox and his coadjutors as their predecessors and models. These were great and good men; but they were men of like passions with ourselves: nor were their views of Divine Truth perfect in every thing, nor are their zealous activities in the service of Christ to be imitated without limitations. No enlightened Christian will propose to copy these illustrious reformers implicitly. There is, however, one grand principle of Knox and his friends which ought to be followed throughout, and the following out of which, with diligent, steadfast, and conscientious zeal, we should humbly think, constitutes the best claim to be the legitimate children of these reforming fathers; and this will be still true even where the greater light of our own times suggests new views on Divine Truth. We refer to the grand principle of the Protestant Re-

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formation, which is to conform the Christian Church to the perfect model of the Scriptures,—to the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, of which Jesus Christ is himself the chief corner-stone. If this were uniformly kept in view, the Presbyterian and United Presbyterian Churches would soon be one. Progressive reformation was contemplated. Nor was it finished by Knox and his auxiliaries. They only began the work. Nor has it been fully completed to this day, probably, by any denomination of the Christian Church. It is a dangerous thing, in our estimation, to regard, as some do, the principles or creed of a Church as unalterably fixed. There are no fixed principles of religion, at least such as should be dogmatically considered such, but in the Scriptures; and every effort of the Church should be to be literally and completely conformed to this unerring and immutable standard. Subordinate standards should ever be kept in their own place, and held as subordinate,—ever subject to review, and brought to the Word of God to be tried, that where defective they may be rectified, or otherwise satisfactorily explained. Such a valuable standard-book as the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms should not be touched, but preserved entire as a sacred memorial of the attainments of former days, and as a guide to us still; and in those things where, from the circumstances of the times, it may not be applicable, or where views are expressed, which greater illumination of the Holy Ghost discovers to be scarcely in accordance with the Scriptural constitution of the Christian Church,—let these be received with such explanations or exceptions as may be considered reasonable and necessary. The differences among evangelical Christians, and especially among evangelical Presbyterians, on the Westminster standards can be but inconsiderable; and certain we are that by a due portion of that charity which “never faileth,” they might all harmoniously unite and co-operate, for the glory of their common Lord, and for the progress of His spiritual kingdom.

We have no expectation of seeing the Presbyterian Church come over at once as a body, to what we consider scriptural

principles on the power of the civil Magistrate in matters of religion. So long have they been looking through a false medium that it is scarcely to be supposed they could all at once discover those defects in their system which are apparent to others. To us it will be quite enough in the meantime, that they show a disposition to exercise forbearance,—that framing decisions and enactments in their Courts they avoid those points of difference which we have been considering, and keep by what may be considered the essentials of the christian system. We shall not insist that they make such resolutions as we could conscientiously do on the only law of Christ for the support of the Gospel, and on the Magistrate having no authority in the Church. But neither should they pass resolutions, like some of those at the last meeting of Synod, in which persons equally conscientious with themselves cannot join. In short, they would free themselves from many entanglements, and they would avoid dangers which threaten their unity and peace, were they only to let the subject of the Magistrate's power alone. It has done mischief in the christian Church before ; and there is reason to fear that if the present course be pursued in the Presbyterian Synod the same subject will be the cause of serious mischief still. When we would suggest to them to review and reverse some of their late deliverances, we by no means expect them to do more, for the present, than to keep a neutral position, on which their own Church might remain united, and on which the hope of union with christian brethren, whose views they have all along been much mistaking, might be cherished. By their late procedures they have shut the door on all reasonable hope of union with others ; and so far as we see, they can never be a Presbyterian Church for Canada as now constituted. Should the present course be pursued, with the same high hand, many will go out from among them when fit opportunity is afforded. These are only hints. We have no expectation, we have no desire, to see our fears realized. We wish for peace. Our object would be healing measures. Our prayer to God is that, by a large effusion of the light of His Word and Spirit, he may lead them in

a plain path, and may make crooked things straight before them, and rough places smooth.

It is not to be wondered at that the Ministers of the Presbyterian Church should be jealous of changes,—should deprecate the idea of being different now, in the constitution of their Church, from what they were when forming a constituent part of a civil Establishment of religion. We honour the integrity and the spirit from which this feeling proceeds. But it is good to be also jealous of ourselves; and in reference even to the constitution of a Church, as well as our personal spiritual frame, to feel as the Apostle did that “we have not yet attained neither are already perfect.” From whatever is not Scriptural the Church should be purged. Let every thing, therefore connected with its visible exhibition be weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary; and whatever is found wanting let it be supplied,—whatever is found superfluous let it be given to the winds of heaven. This Establishment Principle, in every view, in every ramification of which it is susceptible, is, we apprehend, of this description. To abandon it cannot injure, but would greatly benefit the Church. Let every thing, in short, which has no warrant from the Bible, be exploded. Let all civil authoritative interference with religion, except for the protection of Christians, in the peaceful exercise of whatever form of worship their conscience approves, be discontinued and obliterated: and then the envy of Ephraim and Judah shall depart, the divisions in Zion shall be healed, Christianity untrammelled shall exhibit itself in its benignant aspect, and like the self-propagating vegetable creation, “whose seed is in itself,” it shall spread with rapid and resistless triumph through the blessing of God, over the face of the whole earth. Then, but not before, “the Church shall look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”